

*M<sup>r</sup> Garrick as King Lear.*



*Blow winds and burst your Cheeks.*

*Act 3.<sup>d</sup> Scene I.<sup>st</sup>*

*Very fine.*

Published by Harrison & C<sup>o</sup> May 1. 1779.

*Shakspeare (w) K*

# K I N G L E A R.

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## T R A G E D Y.

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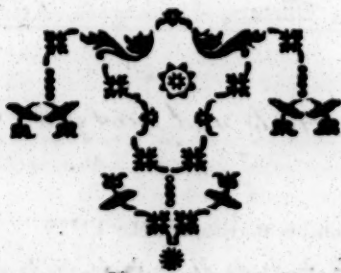
I N

Drury-Lane and Covent-Garden.

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Written by SHAKESPEARE.

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L O N D O N :

Printed for HARRISON and Co. No 18, Paternoster-Row; and Sold, likewise, by  
J. WENMAN, Fleet-Street; and all other Booksellers.

M DCC LXXIX.

# Dramatis Personæ.

## M E N.

King LEAR.

GLOSTER.

KENT.

EDGAR.

BASTARD.



CORNWAL.

ALBANY.

BURGUNDY.

GENTLEMAN-USHER.

## W O M E N.

CONERIL.

REGAN.

CORDELIA.

ARANTE.

Guards, Officers, Messengers, Attendants.

# K I N G L E A R.

## A C T I.

*Enter Bastard solus.*

*Bast.* **T**HOU, nature, art my goddess; to thy law

My services are bound: why am I then  
Depriv'd of a son's right, because I came not  
In the dull road that custom has prescrib'd?  
Why bastard? Wherefore base? when I can boast  
A mind as gen'rous, and a shape as true  
As honest Madam's issue? Why are we  
Held base, who in the lusty stealth of nature  
Take fiercer qualities than what compound  
The scant'd births of the stale marriage-bed?  
Well then, legitimate Edgar, to thy right  
Of law I will oppose a bastard's cunning.  
Our father's love is to the bastard Edmund  
As to legitimate Edgar; with success  
I've practis'd yet on both their easy natures.  
Here comes the old man, chafed with the information  
Which last I forg'd against my brother Edgar;  
A tale so plausible, so boldly utter'd,  
And heighten'd by such lucky accidents,  
That now the slightest circumstance confirms him,  
And base-born Edmund, spight of law, inherits.

*Enter Kent and Gloucester.*

*Gloster* Nay, good my lord, your charity  
O'ershoots itself, to plead in his behalf;  
You are yourself a father, and may feel  
The sting of disobedience from a son  
First-born and best-belov'd. O villain Edgar!

*Kent.* Be not too rash; all may be forgery,  
And time yet clear the duty of your son. [winds]

*Gloster.* Plead with the seas, and reason down the  
Yet shalt thou ne'er convince me: I have seen  
His foul designs through all a father's fondness:  
But be this light and thou my witnesses,  
That I discard him here from my possessions,  
Divorce him from my heart, my blood, and name.

*Bast.* It works as I cou'd wish; I'll shew myself.

[*Aside.*]

*Gloster.* Ha, Edmund, welcome boy. O Kent! see  
Inverted nature, Gloucester's shame and glory: [here  
This bye-born, the wild folly of my youth,  
Pursues me with all filial offices; [mour,  
Whilst Edgar, begg'd of Heaven, and born in ho-  
Draws plagues on my white head, that urge me still  
To curse in age the pleasure of my youth.

May weep not, Edmund, for thy brother's crimes.  
O gen'rous boy! thou shar'st but half his blood,  
Yet lov'st beyond the kindness of a brother:  
But I'll reward thy virtue. Follow me.

My Lord, you wait the king, who comes resolv'd  
To quit the toils of empire, and divide  
His realms amongst his daughters. Heaven suc-  
cess much I fear the change. [ceed it!]

*Kent.* I grieve to see him  
With such wild starts of passion hourly seiz'd,  
And renders majesty beneath itself.

*Gloster.* Alas! 'tis the infirmity of age:  
Yet has his temper ever been unfix'd,  
Chol'rick, and sudden. Hark, they approach.  
[*Exeunt Gloster and Bast.*]

*Flourish.* *Enter Lear, Cornwall, Albany, Bur-*  
*gundy, Edgar, Goneril, Regan, Cordelia.*—Ed-  
gar speaking to Cordelia at entrance.

*Edgar.* Cordelia, royal fair, turn yet once more,  
And ere successful Burgundy receive  
The treasure of thy beauties from the king;  
Ere happy Burgundy for ever fold thee,  
Cast back one pitying look on wretched Edgar.

*Cord.* Alas! what would the wretched Edgar with  
The more unfortunate Cordelia;  
Who, in obedience to a father's will,  
Flies from her Edgar's arms to Burgundy's?

*Lear.* Attend, my lords of Albany and Cornwall,  
With princely Burgundy.

*Alb.* We do, my liege. [divided]

*Lear.* Give me the map.—Know, lords, we have  
In three our kingdom, having now resolv'd  
To disengage from our long toil of state,  
Conferring all upon your younger years.  
You, Burgundy, Cornwall, and Albany,  
Long in our court have made your amorous sojourn,  
And now are to be answer'd.—Tell me, my daugh-  
Which of you loves us most, that we may place [ters,  
Our largest bounty with the largest merit?  
Goneril, our eldest born, speak first?

*Gon.* Sir, I do love you more than words can  
Beyond what can be valu'd rich or rare; [utter,  
Nor liberty, nor sight, health, fame, or beauty,  
Are half so dear; my life for you were vile;  
As much as child can love the best of fathers.

*Lear.* Of all these bounds, e'en from this line to  
With shady forests, and wide-skirted meads, [this,  
We make thee lady; to thine and Albany's issue  
Be this perpetual.—What says our second daughter,  
Regan, wife to Cornwall?

*Reg.* My sister, Sir, in part, express'd my love;  
For such as her's is mine, though more extended:  
Sense has no other joy that I can relish;  
I have my all in my dear liege's love.

*Lear.* Therefore, to thee and thine hereditary,  
Remain this ample third of our fair kingdom.

*Cord.* Now comes my trial—How am I distress'd,  
[*Aside.*]

That must with cold speech tempt the chol'ricking  
Rather to leave me dowerless, than condemn me  
To loath'd embraces!

*Lear.* Speak now our last, not least in our dear love;  
So ends my task of state.—Cordelia, speak.

What canst thou say to win a richer third  
Than what thy sisters gain'd? [theirs,

*Cord.* Now must my love in words, fall short of  
As much as it exceeds in truth.—Nothing, my lord.

*Lear.* Nothing can come of nothing; speak again.

*Cord.* Unhappy am I that I can't dissemble;

Sir, as I ought, I love your majesty,  
No more nor less.

*Lear.* Take heed, Cordelia;  
Thy fortunes are at stake; think better on't,  
And mend thy speech a little.

*Cord.* O my liege!  
You gave me beings, bred me, dearly love me,  
And I return my duty as I ought;  
Obey you, love you, and most honour you.  
Why have my sisters husbands, if they love you all?  
Haply, when I shall wed, the lord whose hand  
Shall take my plight, will carry half my love;  
For I shall never marry like my sisters,  
To love my father all.

*Lear.* And goes thy heart with this?  
'Tis said that I am chol'ric. Judge me, gods,  
Is there not cause! Now, minion, I perceive  
The truth of what has been suggested to us;  
Thy fondness for the rebel son of Gloucester,  
False to his father, as thou art to my hopes;  
And, oh! take heed, rash girl, lest we comply  
With thy fond wishes, which thou wilt too late  
Repent; for know, our nature cannot brook  
A child so young, and so ungentle.

*Cord.* So young, my lord, and true.

*Lear.* Thy truth then be thy dow'r;  
For, by the sacred sun and solemn night,  
I here disclaim all my paternal care,  
And from this minute hold thee as a stranger  
Both to my blood and favour.

*Kent.* This is frenzy.  
Consider, good my liege——

*Lear.* Peace, Kent;  
Come not between a dragon and his rage.  
I lov'd her most, and in her tender trust  
Design'd to have bestow'd my age at ease.  
So be my grave my peace, as here I give  
My heart from her, and with it all my wealth.  
My Lords of Cornwall and of Albany,  
I do invest you jointly with full right  
In this fair third, Cordelia's forfeit dow'r.  
Mark me, my lords, observe our last resolve;  
Ourself, attended with an hundred knights,  
Will make abode with you in monthly course;  
The name alone of king remain with me,  
Yours be th' execution and revenues.  
This is our final will; and to confirm it,  
This coronet part between you.

*Kent.* Royal Lear,  
Whom I have ever honour'd as my king,  
Lov'd as my father, as my master follow'd,  
And, as my patron, thought on in my pray'rs——

*Lear.* Away! the bow is bent, make room the shaft.

*Kent.* No, let it fall, and drench within my heart:  
Be Kent unmannerly when Lear is mad;  
Thy youngest daughter——

*Lear.* On thy life no more.

*Kent.* What wilt thou do, old man?

*Lear.* Out of my sight!

*Kent.* See better first.

*Lear.* Now, by the gods——

*Kent.* Now by the gods, rash king, thou swear'st

*Lear.* Ha, traitor! [in vain.]

*Kent.* Do, kill thy physician, Lear;  
Strike thro' my throat, yet with my latest breath  
I'll thunder in thine ear my just complaint,  
And tell thee to thy face that thou dost ill. [me.]

*Lear.* Hear me, rash man; on thy allegiance hear  
Since thou hast striven to make us break our vow,  
And press'd between our sentence and our pow'r,  
Which nor our nature, nor our place can bear,  
We banish thee for ever from our sight  
And kingdom: if, when three days are expir'd,

Thy hated trunk be found in our dominions,  
That moment is thy death—Away.

*Kent.* Why fare thee well, king; since thou art  
I take thee at thy word, and will not stay [resolv'd,  
To see thy fall—The gods protect thee, maid,  
That truly thinks, and hast most justly said.  
Thus to new climates my old truth I bear;  
Friendship lives hence, and banishment is here.

[Exit.  
*Lear.* Now, Burgundy, you see her price is fall'n;  
Yet if the fondness of your passion still  
Affects her as she stands, dow'rie's, and lost  
In our esteem, she's yours; take her, or leave her.

*Burg.* Pardon me, royal Lear, I but demand  
The dow'r yourself propos'd, and here I take  
Cordelia by the hand, Dukes of Burgundy.

*Lear.* Then leave her, Sir; for, by a father's rage,  
I tell you all her wealth. Away!

*Burg.* Then, Sir, be pleas'd to charge the breach  
Of our alliance on your own will,  
Not my inconstancy. [Exit.

*Manent Edgar and Cordelia*

*Edg.* Has Heav'n then weigh'd the merit of my  
Or is it the raving of a sickly thought; [love,  
Cou'd Burgundy forego so rich a prize,  
And leave her to despairing Edgar's arms?  
Have I thy hand, Cordelia? Do I clasp it?  
The hand that was this minute to have join'd  
My hated rival's? Do I kneel before thee,  
And offer at thy feet my panting heart?  
Smile, princess, and convince me; for as yet  
I doubt, and dare not trust the dazzling joy.

*Cord.* Some comfort yet, that 'twas no vicious blot  
That has depriv'd me of a father's grace,  
But merely want of that, that makes me rich  
In wanting it, a smooth professing tongue.  
O sisters! I am loth to call your fault  
As it deserves; but use our father well,  
And wrong'd Cordelia never shall repine.

*Edg.* O heav'nly maid! that art thyself thy  
Richer in virtue than the stars in light; [dow'r,  
If Edgar's humble fortunes may be grac'd  
With thy acceptance, at thy feet he lays 'em.  
Ha! my Cordelia! dost thou turn away?  
What have I done t' offend thee?

*Cord.* Talk'd of love.

*Edg.* Then I've offended oft; Cordelia too  
Has oft permitted me so to offend.

*Cord.* When, Edgar, I permitted your addresses,  
I was the darling daughter of a king;  
Nor can I now forget my royal birth,  
And live dependent on a lover's fortune:  
I cannot to so low a fate submit;  
And therefore study to forget your passion,  
And trouble me upon this theme no more.

*Edg.* Thus majesty takes most state in distress!  
How are we tost on fortune's fickle flood!  
The wave that with surprising kindness brought  
The dear wreck to my arms, has snatch'd it back,  
And left me mourning on the barren shore.

*Cord.* This baseness of th' ignoble Burgundy,  
Draws just suspicion on the race of men; [Aside.  
His love was int'rest, so may Edgar's be,  
And he but with more compliment dissemble;  
If so, I shall oblige him by denying.  
But if his love be fix'd, such constant flame  
As warms our breasts, if such I find his passion,  
My heart as grateful to his truth shall be,  
And cold Cordelia prove as kind as he. [Exit.

*Enter Bastard basily.*

*Bast.* Brother, I've found you in a lucky minute;  
Fly and be safe; some villain has incens'd  
Our father against your life,

*Edg.* Distress'd Cordelia! but oh, more cruel!

*Bast.* Hear me, Sir; your life, your life's in danger.

*Edg.* A resolve so sudden,  
And of such black importance!

*Bast.* 'Twas not sudden;  
Some villain has of long time laid the train.

*Edg.* And yet, perhaps, 'twas but pretended cold-  
To try how far my passion would pursue. [nests,

*Bast.* He hears me not. 'Wake, 'wake, Sir.

*Edg.* Say ye, brother?—

No tears, good Edmund; if thou bring'st me tidings  
To strike me dead, for charity delay not;  
That present will besit so kind a hand.

*Bast.* Your danger, Sir, comes on so fast,  
That I want time t'inform you; but retire,  
Whilst I take care to turn the pressing stream.  
O gods! for Heaven's sake, Sir—

*Edg.* Pardon me, Sir, a serious thought  
Had seiz'd me; but I think you talk'd of danger,  
And with'd me to retire—Must all our vows  
End thus!—Friend, I obey you.—O Cordelia! [Ex.

*Bast.* Ha! ha! fond man, such credulous honesty  
Lessens the glory of my artifice;

His nature is so far from doing wrongs,  
That he suspects none: if this letter ipeed,  
And pass for Edgar's, as himself would own  
The counterfeit, but for the foul contents,  
Then my designs are perfect—Here comes Gloster.

*Enter Gloster.* [reading?

*Gloster.* Stay, Edmund, turn; what paper were you

*Bast.* A trifle, Sir.

*Gloster.* What needed, then, that terrible dispatch  
Into your pocket? Come, produce it, Sir. [of it

*Bast.* A letter from my brother, Sir; I had  
Just broke the seal, but knew not the contents;  
Yet, fearing they might prove to blame,  
Endeavour'd to conceal it from your sight.

*Gloster.* 'Tis Edgar's character. [Reads.

"This policy of fathers is intolerable, that  
keeps our fortunes from us till age will not suffer  
us to enjoy them; I am weary of the tyranny:  
Come to me, that of this I may speak more. If  
our father would sleep till I waked him, you should  
enjoy half his possessions, and live belov'd of your  
brother

EDGAR."

Sleep till I wak'd him! you should enjoy  
Half his possessions!—Edgar to write this  
'Gainst his indulgent father! Death and hell!  
Fly, Edmund, seek him out; wind me into him,  
That I may bite the traitor's heart, and fold  
His bleeding entrails on my vengeful arm.

*Bast.* Perhaps 'twas writ, my lord, to prove my  
virtue.

*Gloster.* These late eclipses of the sun and moon  
Can bode no less; love cools, and friendship fails;  
In cities mutiny, in countries discord;  
The bond of nature crack'd 'twixt son and father!  
Find out the villain; do it carefully,  
And it shall lose thee nothing. [Exit.

*Bast.* So, now my project's firm; but to make  
sure,

I'll throw in one proof more, and that a bold one;  
I'll place old Gloster where he shall o'er-hear us  
Confer of this design; whilst, to his thinking,  
Deluded Edgar shall accuse himself.

Be honesty my int'rest, and I can  
Be honest too: and what saint so divine,  
That will successful villainy decline? [Exit.

*Enter Kent disguised.*

*Kent.* Now, banish'd Kent, if thou canst pay thy  
duty  
In this disguise, where thou dost stand condemn'd,  
Thy master Lear shall find thee full of labours.

*Enter Lear attended.*

*Lear.* In there, and tell our daughter we are here.  
Now, what art thou?

*Kent.* A man, Sir.

*Lear.* What dost thou profess, or would'st with us?

*Kent.* I do profess to be no less than I seem, to  
serve him truly that puts me in trust, to love him  
that's honest, to converse with him that's wise and  
speaks little, to fight when I can't chuse, and to  
eat no fish.

*Lear.* I say, what art thou?

*Kent.* A very honest-hearted fellow, and as poor  
as the king.

*Lear.* Then art thou poor indeed.—What  
canst thou do?

*Kent.* I can keep honest counsel, mar a curious  
tale in the telling, deliver a plain message bluntly;  
that which ordinary men are fit for, I am qualified  
in; and the best of me is diligence.

*Lear.* Follow me; thou shalt serve me.

*Enter Goneril's Gentleman Usher.*

Now, Sir?

*Gent.* Sir? [Exit; Kent runs after him.

*Lear.* What says the fellow; call the clodpole  
back.

*Att.* My lord, I know not; but methinks your  
highness is entertain'd with slender ceremony.

*Serv.* He says, my lord, your daughter is not well.

*Lear.* Why came not the slave back when I  
called him?

*Serv.* My lord, he answer'd me i'th' surliest  
manner, that he would not.

*Re-enter Gentleman, brought in by Kent.*

*Lear.* I hope our daughter did not instruct him.  
Now, whom am I, Sir?

*Gent.* My lady's father.

*Lear.* My lord's knave. [Strikes him.

*Enter Goneril.*

*Gent.* I'll not be struck, my lord.

*Kent.* Nor tript neither, thou vile civet-hox.

[Strikes up his heels.

*Gon.* By day and night! this is insufferable;  
I will not bear it.

*Lear.* Now, daughter, why that frontlet on?  
Speak, does that frown become our presence?

*Gon.* Sir, this licentious insolence of your servants  
Is most unseemly: hourly they break out  
In quarrels, bred by their unbounded riots:  
I had fair hope by making this known to you,  
To have had a quick redress, but find too late  
That you protect and countenance their outrage;  
And therefore, Sir, I take this freedom, which  
Necessity makes discreet.

*Lear.* Are you our daughter?

*Gon.* Come, Sir, let me intreat you to make use  
Of your discretion, and put off betimes  
This disposition that of late transforms you  
From what you rightly are. [Lear.

*Lear.* Does any here know me? Why, this is not  
Does Lear walk thus? Speak thus? Where are his  
eyes.

Who is it that can tell who I am?

*Gon.* Come, Sir, this admiration's much o'th'  
Of other your new humours; I beseech you [favour  
To understand my purposes aright;  
As you are old, you should be staid and wise:  
Here do you keep an hundred knights and squires,  
Men so debauch'd and bold, that this our palace  
Shews like a riotous inn, a tavern brothel:  
Be then advis'd by her that else will take  
That she begs, to lessen your attendance;  
Take half away, and see that the remainder  
Be such as may besit your age, and know

Themselves and you.

*Lear.* Darkness and devils!

Saddle my horses, call my train together.  
Degenerate viper, I'll not stay with thee!  
I yet have left a daughter—Serpent! monster!  
Lessen my train, and call 'em riotous!  
All men approv'd, of choice and rarest parts,  
That each particular of duty know.—  
How small, Cordelia, was thy fault? O Lear,  
Beat at this gate that let thy folly in,  
And thy dear judgment out—Go, go, my people.

*Going off, meets Albany entering.*

Ingrateful duke, was this your will?

*Alb.* What, Sir?

*Lear.* Death! fifty of my followers at a clap?

*Alb.* The matter, Madam?

*Gen.* Never afflict yourself to know the cause,  
But give his dotage way.

*Lear.* Blasts upon thee!

Th' untented woundings of a father's curse  
Pierce every sense about thee. Old fond eyes,  
Lament this cause again; I'll pluck ye out,  
And cast ye with the waters that ye lose  
To temper clay.—No, Gorgon, thou shalt find  
That I'll resume the shape which thou dost think  
I have cast off for ever.

*Gen.* Mark ye that.

*Alb.* I'm ignorant—

*Lear.* It may be so, my Lord.—Hear, nature!  
Dear goddess, hear; and if thou dost intend  
To make that creature fruitful, change thy purpose;  
Pronounce upon her womb the barren curse,  
That from her blasted body never spring  
A babe to honour her—But if she must bring forth,  
Defeat her joy with some distorted birth,  
Or monstrous form, the prodigy o'th'time;  
And so perverse of spirit, that it may live  
Her torment as 'twas born, to fret her cheeks  
With constant tears, and wrinkle her young brow,  
Turn all her mother's pains to shame and scorn,  
That she may curse her crime too late, and feel  
How sharper than a serpent's tooth it is  
To have a thankless child! Away, away. *[Exit.]*

*Gen.* Presuming thus upon his num'rous train,  
He thinks to play the tyrant here, and hold  
Our lives at will.

*Alb.* Well, you may bear too far. *[Exeunt.]*

## ACT II.

SCENE, Gloster's House.

*Enter Bastard.*

**T**HE Duke comes here to-night, I'll take advantage

Of his arrival to complete my project. =  
Brother, a word: come forth; 'tis I, your friend.

*[Enter Edgar.]*

My father watches for you, fly this place;  
Intelligence is giv'n where you are hid;  
Take the advantage of the night; bethink,  
Have you not spoke against the Duke of Cornwall  
Something might shew you a favourer of  
Duke Albany's party?

*Edg.* Nothing; why ask you?

*Bast.* Because he's coming here to-night in haste,  
And Regan with him—Hark! the guards; away.

*Edg.* Let 'em come on; I'll stay and clear myself.

*Bast.* Your innocence at leisure may be heard,  
But Gloster's storming rage as yet is deaf,  
And you may perish ere allow'd the hearing.

*[Exit Edgar.]*

Gloster comes yonder: Now to my feigned scuffle—

Yield, come before my father! lights here, lights!  
Some blood drawn on me wou'd beget opinion  
Of our more fierce encounter. I have seen  
Drunkards do more than this in sport.

*[Stabs his arm.]*

*Enter Gloster and Servants.*

*Glost.* Now, Edmund, where's the traitor?

*Bast.* That name, Sir,

Strikes horror through me; but my brother, Sir,  
Stood here i'th dark.

*Glost.* Thou bleed'st! Pursue the villain,  
And bring him piece-meal to me.

*Bast.* Sir, he's fled.

*Glost.* Let him fly far, this kingdom shall not  
hide him:

The noble Duke my patron comes to night;  
By his authority I will proclaim

Rewards for him that brings him to the stake,  
And death for the concealer.

Then of my lands, loyal and natural boy,

I'll work the means to make thee capable. *[Exeunt.]*

*Enter Kent (disguised still) and Goneril's Gentleman—Uther, severally.*

*Gent.* Good morrow, friend; belongst thou to this

*Kent.* Ask them will answer thee. *[house?]*

*Gent.* Where may we set our horses?

*Kent.* I'th' mire.

*Gent.* I am in haste; pr'ythee, an' thou lov'st  
me, tell me.

*Kent.* I love thee not.

*Gent.* Why then I care not for thee.

*Kent.* An I had thee in Lipbury pinfold, I'd  
make thee care for me.

*Gent.* What dost thou mean? I know thee not.

*Kent.* But, minion, I know thee.

*Gent.* What dost thou know me for?

*Kent.* For a base, proud, beggarly, white-liver'd,  
glass-gazing, super-serviceable, finical rogue; one  
that wou'd be a pimp in way of good service, and  
art nothing but a composition of knave, beggar,  
coward, pander—

*Gent.* What a monstrous fellow art thou, to rail at  
one that is neither known of thee, nor knows thee?

*Kent.* Impudent slave! not know me, who but  
two days since tript up thy heels before the king?  
Draw, miscreant, or I'll make the moon shine  
through thee.

*Gent.* What means the fellow? Why, pr'ythee,  
pr'ythee; I tell thee I have nothing to do with thee.

*Kent.* I know your roguishness's office; you come  
with letters against the king, taking my young lady  
vanity's part against her royal father: Draw, rascal.

*Gent.* Murder, murder, help.

*[Exit; Kent after him.]*

*Flourish.* *Enter Duke of Cornwall, Regan, attended; Gloster, Bastard.*

*Glost.* All welcome to your graces, you do me  
honour.

*Duke.* Gloster, w've heard with sorrow that your  
Has been attempted by your impious son; *[life]*  
But Edmund here has paid you strictest duty.

*Glost.* He did bewray his practice, and receiv'd  
The hurt you see, striving to apprehend him,

*Duke.* Is he pursued?

*Glost.* He is, my lord.

*Reg.* Use our authority to apprehend  
The traitor, and do justice on his head.

For you, Edmund, that have so signaliz'd  
Your virtue, you from henceforth shall be ours;  
Natures of such firm trust we much shall need.—  
A charming youth, and worth my farther thought!

*[Aside.]*

*Duke.* Lay comfort, noble Gloster, to your breast,

As we to ours. This night be spent in revels.  
We chuse you, Gloster, for our host to-night,  
A troublesome expression of our love.  
On, to the sports before us.—Who are these?

*Enter Gentleman-Usher, pursued by Kent.*

*Gloft.* Now, what's the matter? [*Strikes.*]

*Duke.* Keep peace, upon your lives; he dies that  
Whence, and what are ye?

*Att.* Sir, they are messengers, the one from your  
sister, the other from the king.

*Duke.* Your difference? speak.

*Gent.* I'm scarce in breath, my lord. [*valour.*]

*Kent.* No marvel, you have so bestir'd your  
sister disclaims the dastard; a taylor made him.

*Duke.* Speak yet, how grew your quarrel?

*Gent.* Sir, this old ruffian here, whose life I  
spar'd,

In pity to his beard——

*Kent.* Thou essence bottle!

In pity to my beard!—Your leave, my lord,  
And I will tread the musk-cat into mortar.

*Duke.* Know'st thou our presence?

*Kent.* Yes, Sir, but anger has a privilege.

*Duke.* Why art thou angry?

*Kent.* That such a slave as this should wear a  
sword,

And have no courage; office, and no honesty.

Not frost and fire hold more antipathy

Than I and such a knave.

*Gloft.* Why dost thou call him knave?

*Kent.* His countenance likes me not.

*Duke.* No more perhaps does mine, nor his, or hers.

*Kent.* Plain dealing is my trade; and to be plain,  
I have seen better faces in my time, [*Sir,*]

Than stand on any shoulders now before me.

*Reg.* This is some fellow, that having once been  
prais'd

For bluntness, since affects a saucy rudeness;

But I have known one of these surly knaves,

That in his plainness harbour'd more design,

Than twenty cringing complimenting minions.

*Duke.* What's the offence you gave him?

*Gent.* Never any, Sir;

It pleas'd the king, his master, lately

To strike me on a slender misconstruction;

Whilst, watching his advantage, this old lurcher

Tript me behind, for which the king extoll'd him;

And, flush'd with the honour of this bold exploit,

Drew on me here again.

*Duke.* Bring forth the stocks, we'll teach you.

*Kent.* Sir, I'm too old to learn;

Call not the stocks for me, I serve the king,

On whose employment I was sent to you:

You'll shew too small respect, and too bold malice

Against the person of my royal master,

Stocking his messenger. [*honour,*]

*Duke.* Bring forth the stocks; as I have life and

There shall he sit till noon.

*Reg.* Till noon, my lord! Till night, and all  
night too.

*Kent.* Why, Madam, if I were your father's dog,  
You would not use me so.

*Reg.* Sir, being his knave, I will.

*Gloft.* Let me beseech your graces to forbear him;

His fault is much, and the good king his master

Will check him for't, but needs must take it ill

To be thus slighted in his messenger.

*Duke.* We'll answer that;

Our sister may receive it worse to have

Her gentleman assaulted. To our business, lead. [*Exit.*]

*Gloft.* I am sorry for thee, friend; 'tis the duke's  
pleasure,

Whose disposition will not be controul'd;  
But I'll intreat for thee.

*Kent.* Pray do not, Sir.——

I have watch'd and travell'd hard;

Some time I shall sleep out, the rest I'll whistle.

Farewel t'ye, Sir. [*Exit Gloft.*]

All weary, and o'erwatch'd,

I feel the drowfy guest steal on me: Take

Advantage, heavy eyes, of this kind slumber,

Not to behold this vile and shameful lodging.

[*Sleeps.*]

*Enter Edgar.*

*Edg.* I heard myself proclaim'd,

And by the friendly hollow of a tree,

Escap'd the hunt. No port is free, no place,

Where guards and most unusual vigilance

Do not attend to take me.—How easy now

'Twere to defeat the malice of my trial,

And leave my griefs on my sword's reeking point;

But love detains me from death's peaceful cell,

Still whispering me, Cordelia's in distress;

Unkind as she is, I cannot see her wretched,

But must be near to wait upon her fortune.

Who knows but the white minute yet may come,

When Edgar may do service to Cordelia?

That charming hope still ties me to the oar

Of painful life, and makes me too submit

To th' humblest shifts to keep that life afoot.

My face I will besmear, and knit my locks:

The country gives me proof and precedent

Of Bedlam beggars, who, with roaring voices,

Strike in their numb'd and mortify'd bare arms,

Pins, iron spikes, thorns, sprigs of rosemary;

And thus from sheep-cotes, villages, and mills,

Sometimes with pray'rs, sometimes with lunatick  
bans,

Enforce their charity. Poor Tyrlgood! poor Tom!

That's something yet. Edgar I am no more. [*Ex.*]

*Kent in the stocks still; Enter Lear attended.*

*Lear.* 'Tis strange that they should so depart from  
And not send back our messenger. [*home,*]

*Kent.* Hail, noble master.

*Lear.* How! mak'st thou this shame thy pastime?

What's he that has so much mistook thy place,  
To set thee here?

*Kent.* It is both he and she, Sir; your son and  
daughter.

*Lear.* No.

*Kent.* Yes.

*Lear.* No, I say.

*Kent.* I say, yea.

*Lear.* By Jupiter, I swear, no.

*Kent.* By Juno, I swear, ay.

*Lear.* They durst not do't;

They could not, would not do't; 'tis worse than  
murder,

To do upon respect such violent outrage.

Resolve me with all modest haste, which way

Thou mayst deserve, or they impose this usage.

*Kent.* My lord, when at their home

I did commend your highness' letters to them,

Ere I was ris'n, arriv'd another post,

Stew'd in his haste, breathless and panting forth,

From Goneril, his mistress, salutations;

Whose message being deliver'd, they took horse,

Commanding me to follow and attend

The leisure of their answer; which I did:

But meeting that other messenger,

Whose welcome I perceiv'd had poison'd mine,

Being the very fellow that of late

Had shewn such rudeness to your highness; I,

Having more man than wit about me, drew;

On which he rais'd the house with coward cries:

This was the trespass, which your son and daughter  
Thought worth the shame you see it suffer here.

*Lear.* Oh! this spleen swells upwards to my heart,  
And heaves for passage!—Down, thou climbing rage,  
Thy element's below. Where is this daughter?

*Kent.* Within, Sir, at a masque.

*Enter Gloster.*

*Lear.* Now Gloster?—Ha! [*Gloster whistles* *Lear.*  
Deny to speak with me? Th' are sick, th' are weary,  
They have travell'd hard to-night?—Mere fetches;  
Bring me a better answer.

*Gloster.* My dear lord,

You know the fiery quality of the duke—

*Lear.* Vengeance! death! plague! confusion!  
Fiery? what quality?—Why Gloster, Gloster,  
I'd speak with the Duke of Cornwall and his wife.

*Gloster.* I have inform'd them so.

*Lear.* Inform'd them? dost thou understand me,  
I tell thee, Gloster—

*Gloster.* Ay, my good lord.

*Lear.* The king would speak with Cornwall,  
the dear father

Would with his daughter speak, commands her  
service.

Are they inform'd of this? My breath and blood!  
Fiery? The fiery duke? Tell the hot duke—  
No, but not yet; may be he is not well;  
Infirmity does still neglect all office:  
I beg his pardon, and I'll chide my rashness  
That took the indispos'd and sickly fit  
For the sound man.—But wherefore sits he there?  
Death on my state! this act convinces me  
That this retiredness of the duke and her  
Is plain contempt. Give me my servant forth;  
Go tell the duke and his wife I'd speak with 'em:  
Now instantly.—Bid 'em come forth and hear me:  
Or at their chamber-door I'll beat the drum,  
Till it cry, sleep to death—

*Enter Cornwall and Regan.*

Oh! are you come?

*Duke.* Health to the king?

*Reg.* I am glad to see your highness.

*Lear.* Regan, I think you are; I know what  
cause  
I have to think so. Shou'd'st thou not be glad,  
I wou'd divorce me from my mother's tomb.  
Beloved Regan, thou wilt shake to hear  
What I shall utter: thou cou'd'st ne'er ha' thought  
Thy sister's naught: O Regan, she has ty'd [it—  
Ingratitude like a keen vulture here;  
I can scarce speak to thee.

[*Kent is set at liberty.*]

*Reg.* I pray you, Sir, take patience; I have hope  
That you know less to value her desert,  
Than she to slack her duty.

*Lear.* Ha! How's that?

*Reg.* I cannot think my sister in the least  
Would fail in her respects; but if perchance  
She has restrain'd the riots of your followers,  
'Tis on such grounds, and to such wholesome ends,  
As clear her from all blame.

*Lear.* My curses on her!

*Reg.* O Sir, you're old,  
And shou'd content you to be rul'd and led  
By some discretion that discerns your state  
Better than you yourself; therefore, good Sir,  
Return to our sister, and say you have wrong'd her.

*Lear.* Ha! ask her forgiveness!

No, no, 'twas my mistake; thou didst not mean so.  
Dear daughter, I confess that I am old;  
Age is unnecessary; but thou art good,  
And wilt dispense with my infirmity.

*Reg.* Good Sir, no more of these unfeeling  
Return back to our sister. [passions;

*Lear.* Never, Regan;

She has abated me of half my train,  
Look'd black upon me, stabb'd me with her tongue;  
All the stor'd vengeance of heav'n fall  
On her ingrateful head: Strike her young bones,  
Ye taking airs, with lameness!

*Reg.* O the blest gods! thus will you wish on me,  
When the rash mood—

*Lear.* No, Regan, thou shalt never have my curse,  
Thy tender nature cannot give thee o'er  
To such impiety: thou better know'st  
The offices of nature, bond of childhood,  
And dues of gratitude; thou bear'st in mind  
The half o' th' kingdom, which our love consent  
On thee and thine.

*Reg.* Good Sir, to th' purpose.

*Lear.* Who put my man i' th' stocks?

*Duke.* What trumpet's that?

*Reg.* I know't, my sister's; this confirms her  
letters.

*Enter Goneril's Gentleman-Usher.*

Sir, is your lady come?

*Lear.* More torture still!

This is a slave, whose easy borrow'd pride  
Dwells in the fickle grace of her he follows;  
A fashion fop, that spends the day in dressing,  
And all to bear his lady's flatt'ring message;  
That can deliver with a grace her lye,  
And with as bold a face bring back a greater.  
Out, varlet, from my sight!

*Duke.* What means your grace?

*Lear.* Who stock'd my servant? Regan, I have  
Thou didst not know it. [hope

*Enter Goneril.*

Who comes here? Oh heav'n's!

If you do love old men; if your sweet sway  
Hallow obedience; if yourselves are old,  
Make it your cause; send down, and take my part!  
Why, Gorgon, dost thou come to haunt me here?  
Art not ashamed to look upon this beard?  
Darkness upon my eyes, they play me false.  
O Regan, wilt thou take her by the hand?

*Gon.* Why not by th' hand, Sir? How have I  
offended?

All's not offence that indiscretion finds,  
And dotage terms so.

*Lear.* Heart, thou art too tough!

*Reg.* I pray you, Sir, being old, confess you are so;  
If till the expiration of your month,  
You will return, and sojourn with your sister,  
Dismissing half your train, come then to me;  
I'm now from home, and out of that provision  
That shall be needful for your entertainment.

*Lear.* Return with her, and fifty knights dismiss'd!  
No, rather I'll forswear all roofs, and chuse  
To be companion to the midnight wolf,  
My naked head expos'd to th' merciless air,  
Than have my smallest wants supply'd by her.

*Gon.* At your choice, Sir. [me mad;

*Lear.* Now, I prythee daughter, do not make  
I will not trouble thee, my child. Farewel;  
We'll meet no more, no more see one another;  
Let shame come when it will, I do not call it;  
I do not bid the thunder-bearer strike,  
Nor tell tales of thee to avenging heav'n.  
Mend when thou can'st; be better at thy leisure;  
I can be patient; I can stay with Regan,  
I, and my hundred knights.

*Reg.* Your pardon, Sir;

I look'd not for you yet, nor am provided  
For your fit welcome.

*Lear.* Is this well spoken now? [*lowers.*]

*Reg.* My sister treats you fair. What, fifty fol-  
Is it not well? What should you need of more?

*Gon.* Why might not you, my lord, receive at-  
tendance

From those whom she calls servants, or from mine?

*Reg.* Why not, my lord? If then they chance to  
slack you,

We cou'd controul them.—If you come to me,

For now I see the danger, I intreat you

To bring but five and twenty; to no more

Will I give place.

*Lear.* Oh gods! I gave you all!

*Reg.* And in good time you gave it. [*mov'd*]

*Lear.* Hold now, my temper; stand this bolt un-  
And I am thunder-proof;

The wicked, when compar'd with the more wicked,

Seem beautiful; and not to be the worst,

Stands in some rank of praise. Now, Goneril,

Thou art innocent again, I'll go with thee;

Thy fifty yet does double five and twenty,

And thou art twice her love.

*Gon.* Hear me, my lord.

What need you five and twenty, ten, or five,

To follow in a house, where twice so many

Have a command t' attend you?

*Reg.* What need one? [*plagues!*]

*Lear.* Blood! fire! here—Leprosies and bluest

Room, room for hell to belch her horrors up,

And drench the Circes in a stream of fire;

Hark, how th' infernals echo to my rage

Their whips and snakes!

*Reg.* How lewd a thing is passion!

*Gon.* So old and stomachful?

[*Lightning and thunder.*]

*Lear.* Heav'n's drop your patience down!

You see me here, ye gods, a poor old man,

As full of griefs as age, wretched in both!

I'll hear no more. No, you unnatural hags,

I will have such revenges on you both,

That all the world shall—I will do such things,

What they are, yet I know not; but they shall be

The terrors of the earth. You think I'll weep;

[*Thunders.*]

This heart shall break into a thousand pieces

Before I'll weep.—O gods! I shall go mad! [*Exit.*]

*Duke.* 'Tis a wild night; come out o'the storm.

[*Exit.*]

### A C T III.

SCENE, a desert Heath.

*Enter Lear and Kent in the Storm.*

*Lear.* **B**LOW winds, and burst your cheeks, rage  
louder yet;

Fantastic lightning finge, finge my white head;

Spout cataracts, and hurricanoes fall,

Till you have drown'd the towns and palaces

Of proud, ingrateful man.

*Kent.* Not all my best intreaties can persuade him

Into some needful shelter, or to 'bide

This poor slight covering on his aged head,

Expos'd to this wild war of earth and heav'n.

[*Thunders.*]

*Lear.* Rumble thy fill, fight whirlwind, rain, and  
fire;

Not fire, wind, rain, or thunder, are my daughters:

I tax not you, ye elements, with unkindness;

I never gave you kingdoms, call'd you children;

You owe me no obedience. Then let fall

Your horrible pleasure;—here I stand your slave,

A poor, infirm, weak, and despis'd old man.

Yet I will call you servile ministers,

That have with two pernicious daughters join'd

Your high engender'd battle 'gainst a head

So old and white as mine. Oh! oh! 'tis foul.

*Kent.* Hard by, Sir, is a hovel, that will lend

Some shelter from this tempest. [*a father!*]

*Lear.* I will forget my nature. What! so kind

Ay, there's the point. [*Thunders.*]

*Kent.* Consider, good my liege, things that love

night,

Love not such nights as this; these wrathful skies

Frighten the very wand'ers of the dark, [*rain,*

And make them keep their caves; such drenching

Such sheets of fire, such claps of horrid thunder,

Such groans of roaring winds, have ne'er been

known.

[*Thunders.*]

*Lear.* Let the great gods,

That keep this dreadful pudder o'er our heads,

Find out their enemies now. Tremble, thou wretch,

That hast within thee undiscover'd crimes!

Hide, hide, thou murd'rer, hide thy bloody hand—

Thou perjur'd villain, holy hypocrite,

That drink'st the widow's tears, sigh now, and ask

These dreadful summoners grace.—I am a man

More sinn'd against, than sinning.

*Kent.* Good Sir, to th' hovel.

*Lear.* My wits begin to burn——

Come on, my boy; how dost, my boy? Art cold?

I'm cold myself; shew me this straw, fellow;

The art of our necessity is strange,

And can make vile things precious. My poor knave,

Cold as I am at heart, I've one place there

That's sorry yet for thee. [*Exit.*]

Gloster's Palace. *Enter Bastard.*

*Bast.* The storm is in our louder rev'lings drown'd.

Thus would I reign, cou'd I but mount a throne.

The riots of these proud imperial sisters

Already have impos'd the galling yoke

Of taxes, and hard impositions on

The drudging peasant's neck, who bellows out

His loud complaints in vain—Triumphant queens!

With what assurance do they tread the crowd?

Oh! for a taste of such majestic beauty,

Which none but my hot veins are fit t'engage;

Nor are my wishes desprate; for ev'n now,

During the banquet, I observ'd their glances

Shot thick at me; and, as they left the room,

Each cast, by stealth, a kind inviting smile,

The happy earnest—ha!

Two pages, from several entrances deliver him each  
a letter, and Exit.

*Reads.] Where merit is so transparent, not to be-  
hold it were blindness, and not to reward it ingratu-  
tude.*

GONERIL.

Enough! Blind and ungrateful should I be

Not to obey the summons of this oracle.

Now for a second letter. [*Opens the other.*]

*Reads.] If modesty be not your enemy, doubt not to  
find me your friend.*

REGAN.

Excellent Sybil! O my glowing blood!

I am already sick of expectation,

And pant for the possession.—Here Gloster comes;

With business on his brow; be hush'd, my joys.

*Enter Gloster.*

*Glost.* I come to seek thee, Edmund, to impart a  
business of importance. I know thy loyal heart is  
touch'd to see the cruelty of these ungrateful  
daughters against our royal master.

*Bast.* Most savage and unnatural.

*Glost.* This change in the state fits uneasy. The  
Commons repine aloud at their female tyrants; al-  
ready they cry out for the re-installment of their

good old king, whose injuries, I fear, will inflame them into mutiny.

*Bast.* 'Tis to be hop'd, not fear'd.

*Glo.* Thou hast it, boy; 'tis to be hop'd indeed. On me they cast their eyes, and hourly court me To lead them on; and whilst this head is mine, I'm theirs. A little covert craft, my boy, And then for open action; 'twill be employment Worthy such honest daring souls as thine. Thou, Edmund, art my trusty emissary. Hasten on the spur, at the first break of day,

[*Gives him letters.*]

With these dispatches to the Duke of Cambray. You know what mortal feuds have always flamm'd Between this Duke of Cornwall's family, and his; Full twenty thousand mountaineers Th' inveterate prince will send to our assistance. Dispatch; commend us to his grace, and prosper.

*Bast.* Yes, credulous old man, [Aside.] I will commend you to his grace, His grace the Duke of Cornwall—instantly, To shew him these contents in thy own character, And seal'd with thy own signet; then forthwith The chol'ric duke gives sentence on thy life; And to my hand thy vast revenues fall, To glut my pleasures that till now have starv'd.

[Retires.]

*Gloster going off is met by Cordelia entering; Bastard observing at a distance.*

*Cord.* Turn, Gloster, turn, by all the sacred I do conjure you give my griefs a hearing: 'pow'rs You must, you shall, nay, I am sure you will, For you were always still'd the just and good.

*Glo.* What would'st thou, princess? Rise, and speak thy griefs.

*Cord.* Nay, you shall promise to redress 'em too, Or here I'll kneel for ever. I entreat Thy succour for a father, and a king; An injur'd father, and an injur'd king. [her,

*Bast.* O charming sorrow! How her tears adorn Like dew on flow'rs! But she is virtuous, And I must quench this hopeless fire i'th' kindling.

[Aside.]

*Glo.* Consider, princess, For whom thou beg'st; 'tis for the King that wrong'd thee.

*Cord.* O name not that; he did not, cou'd not wrong me.

Nay, muse not, Gloster, for it is too likely This injur'd king ere this is past you aid, And gone distracted with his savage wrongs.

*Bast.* I'll gaze no more—and yet my eyes are charm'd. [Aside.]

*Cord.* Or, what if it be worse?—Can there be As 'tis too probable, this furious night [worse?] Has pierc'd his tender body, the bleak winds And cold rain chill'd, or lightning struck him dead; If it be so, your promise is discharg'd, And I have only one poor boon to beg, That you'd convey me to his breathless trunk, With my torn robes to wrap his hoary head, With my torn hair to bind his hands and feet, Then with a show'r of tears [him.]

To wash his clay-smear'd cheeks, and die beside  
*Glo.* Rise, fair Cordelia, thou hast pity Enough t'atone for both thy sisters crimes; I have already plotted to restore My injur'd master; and thy virtue tells me We shall succeed, and suddenly. [Exit.]

*Cord.* Dispatch, Arante, Provide me a disguise; we'll instantly Go seek the king, and bring him some relief

*Ar.* How, Madam! are you ignorant

Of what your impious sisters have decreed, Immediate death for any that relieve him?

*Cord.* I cannot dread the furies in this case.

*Ar.* In such a night as this! Consider, Madam, For many miles about there's scarce a bush To shelter in.

*Cord.* Therefore no shelter for the king, And more our charity to find him out: What have not women dar'd for vicious love! And we'll be shining proofs that they can dare For piety as much. Blow winds, and lightnings fall, Bold in my virgin innocence I'll fly [Thunder.] My royal father to relieve, or die. [Exit.]

*Bast.* Provide me a disguise, we'll instantly Go seek the king.—Ha! ha! a lucky change: That virtue which I fear'd wou'd be my hind'rance, Has prov'd the bawd to my design.

I'll bribe two ruffians shall at distance follow, And seize them in some desert place; and there, Whilst one retains her, t'other shall return [too:] To inform me where she's lodg'd. I'll be disguis'd Whilst they are poaching for me, I'll to the duke With these dispatches; then to the field, Where, like the vig'rous Jove, I will enjoy This Semele in a storm; 'twill deaf her cries, Like drums in battle, lest her groans should pierce My pitying ear, and make the am'rous fight less fierce. [Exit.]

*Storm continues. The Field Scene. Enter Lear and Kent.*

*Kent.* Here is the place, my lord; good my lord, The tyranny of this open night's too rough [enter:] For nature to endure.

*Lear.* Let me alone.

*Kent.* Good my Lord, enter.

*Lear.* Wilt break my heart?

*Kent.* Beseech you, Sir.

*Lear.* Thou think'st 'tis much that this content-Invades us to the skin: so 'tis to thee; [cious storm] But where the greater malady is fixt, The lesser is scarce felt: the tempest in my mind Does from my senses take all feeling else, Save what beats there. Filial ingratitude! Is it not as this mouth should tear this hand For lifting food to't?—But I'll punish home! No, I will weep no more. In such a night [Thunder.] To shut me out!—Pour on, I will endure— In such a night as this! O Regan, Goneril! Your old kind father, whose frank heart gave all— O that way madness lies! let me shun that; No more of that.

*Kent.* See, my lord, here's the entrance.

*Lear.* Well, I'll go in, And pass it all; I'll pray, and then I'll sleep. [Thunder.]

Poor naked wretches, whereof'er you are, That 'bide the pelting of this pitiless storm; How shall your houseless heads and unfed sides Sustain this shock, your raggedness defend you, From seasons such as these?

Oh! I have ta'en too little care of this. Take physic, pomp!

Expose thyself to feel what wretches feel, That thou may'st cast the superfluous to them, And shew the heav'ns more just.

*Edgar in the bowel.*

*Edg.* Five fathom, and a half, poor Tom.

*Kent.* What art thou that dost grumble there i'th' straw? Come forth.

*Edg.* Away! the foul fiend follows me—Through the sharp hawthorn blows the cold wind—Mum, go to thy bed and warm thee—Ha! what do I see? By all my griefs, the poor old king bareheaded, And drench'd in this foul storm! Professing tyranny

Are all your protestations come to this!

*Lear.* Tell me, fellow, didst thou give all to thy daughters?

*Edg.* Who gives any thing to poor Tom, whom the foul fiend has led through fire and through flame, through bushes and bogs; that has laid knives under his pillow, and halters in his pew; that has made him proud of heart to ride on a bay trotting horse over four-inched bridges, to court his own shadow for a traitor.—Bless thy five wits, Tom's a-cold. [*Shivers.*] Bless thee from whirlwinds, star-blasting, and taking; do poor Tom some charity, whom the foul fiend vexes.—Sa, sa; there I could have him now, and there, and there again.

*Lear.* Have his daughters brought him to this pass? Couldst thou save nothing? Didst thou give them all?

*Kent.* He has no daughter, Sir.

*Lear.* Death, traitor, nothing could have subdued nature

To such a lowliness, but his unkind daughters.

*Edg.* Pillicock fat upon Pillicock hill; hallo, hallo, hallo.

*Lear.* Is it the fashion, that disregarded fathers should have such little mercy on their flesh? Judicious punishment! 'Twas this flesh begot those pelican daughters.

*Edg.* Take heed of the foul fiend; obey thy parents; keep thy word justly; swear not, commit not with man's sworn spouse; set not thy sweet heart on proud array.—Tom's a cold.

*Lear.* What hast thou been?

*Edg.* A serving-man proud of heart; that curl'd my hair; used perfume and washes; that served the lust of my mistress's heart, and did the act of darkness with her; swore as many oaths as I spoke words, and broke them all in the sweet face of Heaven. Let not the paint, nor the patch, nor the rustling of silks, betray thy poor heart to woman; keep thy foot out of brothels, thy hand out of plackets, thy pen from creditors books. And defy the foul fiend.—Still through the hawthorn blows the cold wind.

*Lear.* Death! thou wert better in thy grave, than thus to answer, with thy uncovered body, this extremity of the sky. And yet consider him well, and man's no more than this; thou art indebted to the worm for no silk, to the beast for no hide, to the cat for no perfume.—Ha! here's two of us are sophisticated: thou art the thing itself; unaccommodated man is no more than such a poor bare forked animal as thou art.

Off, off, ye vain disguises, empty lendings, I'll be my original self: quick, quick, uncase me.

*Kent.* Defend his wits, good Heaven!

*Lear.* One point I had forgot; what is your name?

*Edg.* Poor Tom, that eats the swimming frog, the wall-newt and the water-newt; that in the fury of his heart, when the foul fiend rages, eats cow-dung for fallads, swallows the old rat and the ditch-dog; that drinks the green mantle of the standing pool; that's whipt from tything to tything; that has three suits to his back, six shirts to his body,

Horse to ride, and weapon to wear:

But rats and mice, and such small deer,

Have been Tom's food for seven long year.

Beware my follower; peace, Smolkin, peace, thou foul fiend!

*Lear.* One word more, but be sure a true counsel; tell me, is a madman a gentleman, or a yeoman?

*Kent.* I fear'd 'twou'd come to this; his wits are gone.

*Edg.* Frater-rato calls me, and tells me Nero is an angler in the lake of darkness. Pray innocent, and beware the foul fiend.

*Lear.* Right, ha! ha! was it not pleasant to have a thousand with red-hot spits come hissing in upon them?

*Edg.* My tears begin to take his part so much, They mar my counterfeiting. [*Aside.*]

*Lear.* The little dogs and all, Tray, Blanch, and Sweetheart, see they bark at me.

*Edg.* Tom will throw his head at 'em. 'Vaunt, ye Be thy mouth or black or white, [*curs.*]

Tooth that poisons if it bite:

Mastiff, greyhound, mungrel grim,

Hound, or spaniel, brache, or lym:

Bob-rail tike, or trundle-tail,

Tom will make 'em weep and wail:

For with throwing thus my head,

Dogs leap the hatch, and all are fled.

Come, march to wakes and fairs, and market-towns.

—Poor Tom, thy horn is dry.

*Lear.* You, Sir, I entertain you for one of my hundred, only I do not like the fashion of your garments: you'll say they're Persian, but no matter, let 'em be changed.

*Enter Gloster.*

*Edg.* This is the foul Flibbertigibbet; he begins at curfew, and walks till the first cock; he gives the web, and the pin; knits the elstock; squints the eye, and makes the hare-lip; mildews the white wheat, and hurts the poor creatures of the earth.

Swithin footed thrice the wold,

He met the night-mare and her nine fold,

'Twas there he did appoint her;

He bid her alight, and her troth plight,

And aroynt the witch, aroynt her.

*Gloster.* What, has your grace no better company?

*Edg.* The Prince of Darkness is a gentleman; Modo he is call'd, and Mahu.

*Gloster.* Go with me, Sir; hard by I have a tenant. My duty cannot suffer me to obey in all your daughters hard commands, who have enjoin'd me to make fast my doors, and let this tyrannous night take hold upon you. Yet have I ventur'd to come seek you out, and bring you where both fire and food are ready.

*Kent.* Good my lord, take this offer.

*Lear.* First let me talk with this philosopher. Say, Stagyrice, what is the cause of thunder?

*Gloster.* Beseech you, Sir, go with me.

*Lear.* I'll talk a word with this same learned Theban.

What is your study?

*Edg.* How to prevent the fiend, and to kill vermin.

*Lear.* Let me ask you a word in private.

*Kent.* His wits are quite unsettled; good Sir, let's force him hence.

*Gloster.* Canst blame him? His daughters seek his death; this bedlam but disturbs him the more. Fellow, be gone.

*Edg.* Child Rowland, to the dark tower came, His word was still fie, foh, and fum, I smell the blood of a British man.—O! torture!

[*Exit.*]

*Gloster.* Now, I prythee, friend, let's take him in our arms, and carry him where he shall meet both welcome and protection. Good Sir, along with us.

*Lear.* You say right, let 'em anatomize Regan, see what breeds about her heart; is there any cause in nature for these hard hearts?

*Kent.* I beseech your grace.

*Lear.* Hift!—Make no noise, make no noise—  
so, so; we'll to supper i' th' morning. [*Exeunt.*]

*Enter Cordelia and Arante.*

*Ar.* Dear Madam, rest ye here our search is vain;  
Look, here's a shed; beseech ye, enter here.

*Cord.* Pr'ythee go in thyself, seek thy own ease;  
Where the mind's free, the body's delicate.  
This tempest but diverts me from the thought  
Of what would hurt me more.

*Enter two Ruffians.*

*1 Ruff.* We have dogg'd 'em far enough; this  
place is private;

I'll keep 'em prisoners here within this hovel,  
Whilst you return and bring Lord Edmund hither;  
But help me first to house 'em.

*2 Ruff.* Nothing but this dear devil [*Shows gold.*]  
Should have drawn me through all this tempest.  
But to our work.—

[*They seize Cordelia and Arante, who shriek out.*  
Soft, Madam, we are friends; dispatch, I say.

*Cord.* Help, murder, help. Gods! some kind  
To strike me dead! [*thunderbolt*]

*Enter Edgar.*

*Edg.* What cry was that!—Ha! women seiz'd  
Is this a place and time for villainy? [*by ruffians!*]  
Avaunt, ye bloodhounds.

[*Drives them with his quarter-staff.*]

*Botb.* The devil, the devil! [*Run off.*]

*Edg.* O speak, what are ye that appear to be  
O' th' tender sex, and yet unguarded wander  
Through the dead mazes of this dreadful night,  
Where (tho' at full) the clouded moon scarce darts  
Imperfect glimmerings?

*Cord.* First say, what art thou,  
Our guardian angel, that wert pleas'd t' assume  
That horrid shape to fright the ravishers?  
We'll kneel to thee.

*Edg.* O my tumultuous blood!  
By all my trembling veins, Cordelia's voice!  
'Tis she herself!—My senses sure conform  
To my wild garb, and I am mad indeed. [*Aside.*]

*Cord.* Whate'er thou art, befriend a wretched vir-  
And if thou canst, direct our weary search. [*Sing.*]

*Edg.* Who relieves poor Tom, that sleeps on the  
nettle, with the hedge-pig for his pillow,

Whilst Smug ply'd the bellows,

She truck'd with her fellows;

The freckle-fac'd Mab

Was a blouze and a drab,

Yet Swithin made Oberon jealous.—Oh! torture!

*Ar.* Alack, Madam! a poor wand'ring lunatic.

*Cord.* And yet his language seem'd but now well  
temper'd.

Speak, friend, to one more wretched than thyself;  
And if thou hast one interval of sense,  
Inform us, if thou canst, where we may find  
A poor old man, who thro' this heath hath stray'd  
The tedious night.—Speak, saw'st thou such a one?

*Edg.* The king, her father, whom she's come to  
Thro' all the terrors of this night: O gods! [*seek*]  
That such amazing piety, such tenderness,  
Shou'd yet to me be cruel!— [*Aside.*]  
Yes, fair-one, such a one was lately here,  
And is convey'd by some that came to seek him,  
To a neighb'ring cottage; but distinctly where,  
I know not.

*Cord.* Blessings on them!

Let's find him out, Arante, for thou seest  
We are in Heaven's protection. [*Going off.*]

*Edg.* O Cordelia!

*Cord.* Ha!—Thou know'st my name.

*Edg.* As you did once know Edgar's.

*Cord.* Edgar!

*Edg.* The poor remains of Edgar, what your  
corn has left him.

*Cord.* Do we wake, Arante?

*Edg.* My father seeks my life, which I preserv'd  
In hope of some bless'd minute to oblige  
Distress'd Cordelia, and the gods have given it;  
That thought alone prevail'd with me to take  
This frantic dress, to make the earth my bed,  
With these bare limbs all change of seasons 'bide,  
Noon's scorching heat, and midnight's piercing cold,  
To feed on offals, and to drink with herds,  
To combat with the winds, and be the sport  
Of clowns, or what's more wretched yet, their pity.

*Cord.* Was ever tale so full of misery!

*Edg.* But such a fall as this I grant was due  
To my aspiring love, for 'twas presumptuous,  
Though not presumptuously pursued;  
For well you know I wore my flame conceal'd,  
And silent as the lamps that burn in tombs,  
Till you perceiv'd my grief, with modest grace  
Drew forth the secret, and then seal'd my pardon.

*Cord.* You had your pardon, nor can you chal.

*Edg.* What do I challenge more? [*venge more.*]  
Such vanity agrees not with these rags:

When in my prosp'rous state, rich Gloster's heir,  
You silenc'd my pretences, and enjoin'd me  
To trouble you upon that theme no more;  
Then what reception must love's language find  
From these bare limbs and beggar's humble weeds?

*Cord.* Such as a voice of pardon to a wretch con-  
Such as the shouts [*demn'd;*]  
Of succouring forces to a town besieg'd.

*Edg.* Ah! what new method now of cruelty?

*Cord.* Come to my arms, thou dearest, best of men,  
And take the kindest vows that e'er were spoke  
By a protesting maid.

*Edg.* Is't possible?

[*heart,*]

*Cord.* By the dear vital stream that bathes my  
These hallow'd rags of thine, and naked virtue,  
These abject tassels, these fantastic shreds,  
(Ridiculous even to the meanest clown)  
To me are dearer than the richest pomp  
Of purpled monarchs.

*Edg.* Generous, charming maid!

The gods alone that made, can rate thy worth!  
This most amazing excellence shall be  
Fame's triumph in succeeding ages, when  
Thy bright example shall adorn the scene,  
And teach the world perfection.

*Cord.* Cold and weary

We'll rest awhile, Arante, on that straw,  
Then forward to find out the poor old king.

*Edg.* Look, I have flint and steel, the implements  
Of wand'ring lunatics; I'll strike a light,  
And make a fire beneath this shed, to dry [*thee;*]  
Thy storm-drench'd garments, ere thou lie to rest  
Then, fierce and wakeful as th' Hesperian dragon,  
I'll watch beside thee to protect thy sleep:  
Meanwhile the stars shall dart their kindest beams,  
And angels visit my Cordelia's dreams. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE, *The Palace.*

*Enter Cornwall, Regan, Bastard, Servants. Corn-  
wal with Gloster's letters.*

*Duke.* I will have my revenge ere I depart his  
Regan, see here, a plot upon our state; [*house.*]  
'Tis Gloster's character, that has betray'd  
His double trust of subject and of host.

*Reg.* Then double be our vengeance. This con-  
firms

Th' intelligence that we but now receiv'd,  
That he has been this night to seek the king.  
But who, Sir, was the kind discoverer?

**Duke.** Our eagle, quick to spy, and fierce to seize;  
Our trusty Edmund.

**Reg.** 'Twas a noble service;  
O Cornwall, take him to thy deepest trust,  
And wear him as a jewel at thy heart.

**Bast.** Think, Sir, how hard a fortune I sustain,  
That makes me thus repent of serving you. [*Weeps.*]  
O that this treason had not been, or I  
Not the discoverer!

**Duke.** Edmund, thou shalt find  
A father in our love, and from this minute  
We call thee Earl of Gloster; but there yet  
Remains another justice to be done,  
And that's to punish this discarded traitor;  
But lest thy tender nature should relent  
At his just sufferings, nor brook the sight,  
We with thee to withdraw.

**Reg.** The grotto, Sir, within the lower grove,  
Has privacy to suit a mourner's thought.

[*To Edmund aside.*]

**Bast.** And there I may expect a comforter,  
Ha, Madam?

**Reg.** What may happen, Sir, I know not;  
But 'twas a friend's advice. [*Exit Bastard.*]

**Duke.** Bring in the traitor.

*Gloster brought in.*

Bind fast his arms.

**Gloft.** What mean your graces?  
You are my guests, pray do me no foul play.

**Duke.** Bind him, I say; hard, harder yet.

**Reg.** Now, traitor, thou shalt find——

**Duke.** Speak, rebel, where hast thou sent the  
king?

Whom, spight of our decree, thou saw'st last night.

**Gloft.** I'm ty'd to th' stake, and must stand the  
course.

**Reg.** Say where, and why thou hast conceal'd him?

**Gloft.** Because I wou'd not see thy cruel hands  
Tear out his poor old eyes, nor thy fierce sister  
Carve his anointed flesh; but I shall see  
The swift-wing'd vengeance overtake such children.

**Duke.** See't thou shalt never! Slaves, perform  
your work,

Out with those treacherous eyes; dispatch, I say;  
If thou see'st vengeance——

**Gloft.** He that will think to live till he be old,  
Give me some help.—O cruel! oh! ye gods.

[*They put out his eyes.*]

**Serv.** Hold, hold, my lord, I bar your cruelty;  
I cannot love your safety, and give way  
To such barbarous practice.

**Duke.** Ah, my villain!

**Serv.** I have been your servant from my infancy,  
But better service have I never done you,  
Than with this boldness——

**Duke.** Take thy death, slave.

**Serv.** Nay, then revenge whilst yet my blood is  
warm. [*Fight.*]

**Reg.** Help here—Are you not hurt, my lord?

**Gloft.** Edmund, enkindle all the sparks of nature  
To quit this horrid act.

**Reg.** Out, treacherous villain,  
Thou call'st on him that hates thee; it was he  
That broach'd thy treason, shew'd us thy dispatches;  
There—read, and save the Cambrian prince a la-  
If thy eyes fail thee, call for spectacles. [*Bour.*]

**Gloft.** O my folly!

Then Edgar was abus'd; kind gods, forgive me that!

**Reg.** How is't, my lord?

**Duke.** Turn out that eyeless villain, let him smell  
His way to Cambray; throw this slave upon a  
dunghill.

**Regan,** I bleed apace; give me your arm. [*Exeunt.*]

**Gloft.** All dark, and comfortless!

Where are those various objects that, but now,  
Employ'd my busy eyes? Where those eyes?  
Dead are their piercing rays, that lately shot  
O'er flow'ry vales to distant sunny hills,  
And drew with joy the vast horizon in.  
These groping hands are now my only guides,  
And feeling all my sight.  
O misery! what words can sound my grief?  
Shut from the living whilst among the living;  
Dark as the grave amidst the bustling world.  
At once from business, and from pleasure barr'd:  
No more to view the beauty of the spring,  
Nor see the face of kindred, or of friend;  
Yet still one way th' extremest fate affords,  
And e'en the blind can find the way to death.  
Must I then tamely die, and unreveng'd?  
So Lear may fall: no, with these bleeding rings  
I will present me to the pitying crowd,  
And with the rhetorick of these dropping veins  
Inflame them to revenge their king and me;  
Then, when the glorious mischief is on wing,  
This lumber from some precipice I'll throw,  
And dash it on the ragged flint below;  
Whence my freed soul to her bright sphere shall fly,  
Through boundless orbs eternal regions spy,  
And, like the sun, be all one glorious eye.



## A C T IV.

### SCENE, A Grotto.

Edmund and Regan amorously seated, listening to  
Musick.

**Bast.** **W**H Y were those beauties made an-  
other's right,  
Which none can prize like me? charming queen,  
Take all my blooming youth; for ever fold me  
In those soft arms; lull me in endless sleep,  
That I may dream of pleasures too transporting  
For life to bear.

**Reg.** Live, live, my Gloster,  
And feel no death, but that of swooning joy!  
I yield thee blisses on no harder terms,  
Than that thou continue to be happy.

**Bast.** This jealousy is yet more kind; is't possible  
That I should wander from a paradise  
To feed on sickly weeds? such sweets live here,  
That constancy will be no virtue in me.  
And yet must I forthwith go meet her sister, [*Aside.*]  
To whom I must protest as much——  
Suppose it be the same; why, best of all,  
And I have, then, my lesson ready conn'd.

**Reg.** Wear this remembrance of me—I dare now  
[*Gives a ring.*]

Absent myself no longer from the duke,  
Whose wound grows dangerous—I hope, mortal.

**Bast.** And let this happy image of your Gloster  
[*Pulling out a picture, drops a note.*]  
Lodge in that breast where all his treasure lies.

[*Exit.*]

**Reg.** To this brave youth a woman's blooming  
beauties

Are due; my fool usurps my bed—What's here?  
Confusion on my eyes!

**Reads.** "Where merit is so transparent, not to  
behold it were blindness, and not to reward it in-  
gratitude. GONERIL."

Vexatious accident! yet fortunate too;  
My jealousy's confirm'd, and I am taught

To cast for my defence—— [*Enter an Officer.*]

Now, what mean those shouts, and this thy hasty entrance?

*Off.* A most surprising and a sudden change;  
The peasants are all up in mutiny,  
And only want a chief to lead them on  
To storm your palace.

*Reg.* On what provocation?

*Off.* At last day's public festival, to which  
The yeomen from all quarters had repair'd,  
Old Gloster, whom you late deprived of sight,  
(His veins yet streaming fresh) presents himself,  
Proclaims your cruelty, and their oppression,  
With the king's injuries: which so enrag'd them,  
That now that mutiny, which long had crept,  
Takes wing, and threatens your best pow'rs.

*Reg.* White-liver'd slaves!

Our forces rais'd, and led by valiant Edmund,  
Shall drive this monster of rebellion back  
To her dark cell; young Gloster's arm allays  
The storm his father's feeble breath did raise. [*Exit.*

*The Field Scene. Enter Edgar.*

*Edg.* The lowest and most abject thing of fortune  
Stands still in hope, and is secure from fear;  
The lamentable change is from the best,  
The worst returns to better.—Who comes here?

*Enter Gloster, led by an Old Man.*

My father poorly led! depriv'd of sight!  
The precious stones torn from their bleeding rings!  
Something I heard of this inhuman deed,  
But disbeliev'd it, as an act too horrid  
For the hot hell of a curst woman's fury.  
When will the measure of my woes be full!

*Gloft.* Revenge, thou art on foot; success attend  
Well have I sold my eyes, if the event [*thee:*  
Prove happy for the injur'd king.

*Old M.* O, my good lord, I have been your tenant  
and your father's tenant these fourscore years.

*Gloft.* Away, get thee away; good friend, be  
Thy comforts can do me no good at all, [*gone;*  
Thee they may hurt.

*Old M.* You cannot see your way.

*Gloft.* I have no way, and therefore want no eyes;  
I stumbled when I saw. O dear son Edgar,  
The food of thy abused father's wrath;  
Might I but live to see thee in my touch,  
I'd say I had eyes again.

*Edg.* Alas, he's sensible that I was wrong'd;  
And should I own myself, his tender heart  
Would break betwixt the extremes of grief and joy.

*Old M.* How now? who's there?

*Edg.* A charity for poor Tom. Play fair, and  
defy the foul fiend.

O gods! and must I still pursue this trade,  
Trifling beneath such loads of misery? [*Aside.*

*Old M.* 'Tis poor mad Tom.

*Gloft.* In the late storm I such a fellow saw,  
Which made me think a man a worm.  
Where is the lunatick?

*Old M.* Here, my lord.

*Gloft.* Get thee now away; if for my sake  
Thou wilt o'ertake us hence a mile or two,  
I'll th' way to Dover, do't for ancient love,  
And bring some cov'ring for this naked wretch,  
Whom I'll intreat to lead me.

*Old M.* Alack, my lord, he's mad. [*the blind.*

*Gloft.* 'Tis the time's plague when madmen lead  
Do as I bid thee.

*Old M.* I'll bring him the best p'arel that I have,  
Come on't what will. [*Exit.*

*Gloft.* Sirrah! naked fellow!

*Edg.* Poor Tom's a cold.—I cannot foolit longer,  
And yet I must—Bless thy sweet eyes, they bleed;  
Believ't, poor Tom e'en weeps his blind to see 'em.

*Gloft.* Know'st thou the way to Dover?

*Edg.* Both stile and gate, horse-way and foot-path  
Poor Tom has been scared out of his good wits. Bless  
every true man's son from the foul fiend.

*Gloft.* Here take this purse; that I am wretched  
Makes thee the happier. Heav'n deal so still!  
Thus let the griping usurer's hoard be scatter'd,  
So distribution shall undo excess,  
And each man have enough. Dost thou know Dover?

*Edg.* Ay, master.

*Gloft.* There's a cliff, whose high and bending  
Looks dreadfully down on the roaring deep; [*head*  
Bring me but to the very brink of it,  
And I'll repair the poverty thou bear'st  
With something rich about me: from that place  
I shall no leading need.

*Edg.* Give me thy arm: poor Tom shall guide thee.

*Gloft.* Soft: for I hear the tread of passengers.

*Enter Kent and Cordelia.*

*Cord.* Ah me! Your fear's too true, it was the  
I spoke but now with some that met him [*king;*  
As mad as the vex'd sea, singing aloud,  
Crown'd with rank fumiter, and furrow weeds,  
With berries, burdocks, violets, daizies, poppies,  
And all the idle flowers that grow  
In our sustaining corn: conduct me to him,  
To prove my last endeavours to restore him,  
And heav'n so prosper thee!

*Kent.* I will, good lady.

Ha! Gloster here!—Turn, poor dark man, and hear  
A friend's condolment, who at sight of thine  
Forgets his own distress; thy old true Kent.

*Gloft.* How! Kent? From whence return'd?

*Kent.* I have not since my banishment been absent,  
But in disguise follow'd th' abandon'd king.  
I was methou saw'st with him in the late storm.

*Gloft.* Let me embrace thee; had I eyes, I now  
Should weep for joy; but let this trickling blood  
Suffice instead of tears.

*Cord.* O misery!

To whom shall I complain, or in what language?  
Forgive, O wretched man, the piety  
That brought thee to this pass; 'twas I that caus'd it;  
I cast me at thy feet, and beg of thee  
To crush these weeping eyes to equal darkness,  
If that will give thee any recompence.

*Edg.* Was ever season so distress'd as this? [*Aside.*

*Gloft.* I think, Cordelia's voice! Rise, pious prince,  
And take a dark man's blessing. [*cess,*

*Cord.* O, my Edgar!

My virtue's now grown guilty, works the bane  
Of those that do befriend me. Heaven forsakes me,  
And when you look that way, it is but just  
That you should hate me too. [*wound*

*Edg.* O wave this cutting speech, and spare to  
A heart that's on the rack.

*Gloft.* No longer cloud thee, Kent, in that disguise;  
There's business for thee, and of noblest weight:  
Our injur'd country is at length in arms,  
Urg'd by the king's inhuman wrongs and mine,  
And only want a chief to lead them on.  
That task be thine.

*Edg.* Brave Britain! then there's life in't yet.

*Kent.* Then have we one cast for our fortune still.  
Come, princess, I'll bestow you with the king,  
Then on the spur to head these forces.  
Farewel, good Gloster; to our conduct trust.

*Gloft.* And be your cause as prosp'rous as 'tis just.

*Goneril's Palace. Enter Goneril and Attendants.*  
*Gon.* It was great ignorance, Gloster's eyes being  
To let him live; where he arrives, he moves [*out,*  
All hearts against us: Edmund, I think, is gone,  
In pity to his misery, to dispatch him.

*Gent.* No Madam, he's return'd on speedy sum-  
Back to your sister.

*Gen.* Ah! I like not that,  
Such speed must have the wings of love. Where's  
Albany?

*Gent.* Madam, within, but never man so chang'd;  
I told him of the uproar of the peasants,  
He smil'd at it; when I inform'd him  
Of Gloster's treason—

*Gen.* Trouble him no farther,  
It is his coward spirit; back to our sister,  
Hasten her musters, and let her know  
I have given the distaff into my husband's hands.  
That done, with special care deliver these dispatches  
In private to young Gloster.

*Enter a Messenger.*

*Mess.* O Madam, most unseasonable news:  
The Duke of Cornwall's dead of his late wound,  
Whose loss your sister has in part supply'd,  
Making brave Edmund general of her forces.

*Gen.* One way, I like this well;  
But being a widow, and my Gloster with her,  
May blast the promis'd harvest of our love.  
A word more, Sir—Add speed to your journey.  
And if you chance to meet with that blind traitor,  
Preferment falls on him that cuts him off. [*Ex.*]

*The Field Scene. Gloster and Edgar.*

*Gloster.* When shall we come to th' top of that same  
hill?

*Edg.* We climb it now; mark how we labour.

*Gloster.* Methinks the ground is even.

*Edg.* Horribly steep. Hark, do you hear the sea?

*Gloster.* No truly.

*Edg.* Why then your other senses grow imperfect  
By your eyes anguish.

*Gloster.* So may it be indeed.

Methinks thy voice is alter'd, and thou speak'st  
In better phrase and matter than thou didst.

*Edg.* You are much deceiv'd; in nothing am I al-  
But my garments. [*ter'd*]

*Gloster.* Methinks you're better spoken.

*Edg.* Come on, Sir, here's the place. How fearful  
And dizzy 'tis to cast one's eyes so low!  
The crows and choughs, that wing the midway air,  
Shew scarce so big as beetles. Half way down  
Hangs one that gathers samphire, dreadful trade!  
The fishermen that walk upon the beach,  
Appear like mice: and yon tall anch'ring bark  
Seems lessen'd to her cock; her cock a buoy,  
Almost too small for sight. The murmur'ing surge  
Cannot be heard so high. I'll look no more,  
Lest my brain turn, and the disorder make me  
Tumble down headlong.

*Gloster.* Set me where you stand.

*Edg.* You are now within a foot of th' extreme  
For all beneath the moon I wou'd not now [*verge* :  
Leap forward.

*Gloster.* Let go my hand.

Here, friend, is another purse; in it a jewel  
Well worth a poor man's taking. Get thee farther;  
Bid me farewell, and let me hear thee going.

*Edg.* Fare you well, Sir.—That I do trifle thus  
With his despair, is with design to cure it.

*Gloster.* Thus, mighty gods, this world I do renounce.  
And in your sight shake my afflictions off:  
If I could bear them longer, and not fall  
To quarrel with your great opposeless wills,  
My snuff and feebler part of nature shou'd  
Burn itself out. If Edgar live, oh! bless him!  
Now, fellow, fare thee well. [*He falls.*]

*Edg.* Good Sir, farewell.

And yet I know not how conceit may rob  
The treasury of life. Had he been where he thought,

By this had thought been past.—Alive, or dead?

Ho, Sir! Friend! hear you, Sir? Speak—

Thus might he pass, indeed—yet he revives.

What are you, Sir?

*Gloster.* Away, and let me die.

[*thers, air,*]

*Edg.* Hadst thou been aught but gossamer, fea-  
Falling so many fathom down,  
Thou'dst shiver'd like an egg; but thou dost breathe.  
Hast heavy substance, bleed'st not; speak, art sound?  
Thy life's a miracle.

*Gloster.* But have I fallen, or no?

*Edg.* From the dread summit of this chalky bourn  
Look up an height, the shrill-tun'd lark so high  
Cannot be seen or heard; do but look up.

*Gloster.* Alack, I have no eyes.

Is wretchedness depriv'd that benefit  
To end itself by death?

*Edg.* Give me your arm.

Up, so—how is't? Feel you your legs? you stand.

*Gloster.* Too well, too well,

*Edg.* Upon the crown o'th' cliff, what thing was  
Which parted from you? [*that*]

*Gloster.* A poor unfortunate beggar.

*Edg.* As I stood here below, methought his eyes  
Were too full moons, wide nostrils breathing fire.

It was some fiend; therefore, thou happy father,  
Think that th' all powerful gods, who make them  
honours

Of men's impossibilities, have preserv'd thee.

*Gloster.* 'Tis wonderful! henceforth I'll bear as-  
tinction

Till it expire; the goblin which you speak of,  
I took it for a man: oft-times 'twould say,

The fiend, the fiend: he led me to that place.

*Edg.* Bear free and patient thoughts. But who  
comes here?

*Enter Lear, a Coronet of Flowers on his Head.*

*Wreaths and Garlands about him.*

*Lear.* No, no; they cannot touch me for coining;  
I am the king himself.

*Edg.* O piercing sight!

*Lear.* Nature's above art in that respect; there's  
your press-money: that fellow handles his bow like  
a crow-keeper—Draw me a clothier's yard. A  
mouse, a mouse! peace, ho! there's my gauntlet;  
I'll prove it on a giant: bring up the brown-bills;  
O well flown barb; i'th' white, i'th' white.—  
Hewgh! Give the word.

*Edg.* Sweet Marjoram.

*Lear.* Pass.

*Gloster.* I know that voice.

*Lear.* Ha! Goneril with a white beard! they  
flatter'd me like a dog, and told me I had white  
hairs on my chin, before the black ones were  
there; to say ay and no to every thing that I said:  
ay and no too, was no good divinity. When the rain  
came once to wet me, and the winds to make me  
chatter; when the thunder would not peace at my  
bidding, there I found 'em, there I smelt them out.  
Go to, they are not men of their words; they told  
me I was every thing; 'tis a lye,  
I am not ague-proof.

*Gloster.* That voice I well remember: is't not the  
king?

*Lear.* Ay, every inch a king: when I do stare,  
See how the subject quakes.

I pardon that man's life.—What was the cause?

Adultery? thou shalt not die: die for adultery?

The wren goes to't, and the small gilded fly

Engenders in my sight. Let copulation thrive;

For Gloster's bastard son was kinder to his father,  
Than were my daughters, got i'th' lawful bed.

To't, luxury, pell mell; for I lack soldiers.

*Gloft.* Not all my sorrows past so deep have touch'd me

As these sad accents; sight were now a torment.—

*Lear.* Behold that simpering lady, she that starts At pleasure's name, and thinks her ear profan'd With the least wanton word, wou'd you believe it? The fitchew, nor the pamper'd steed goes to't with such a riotous appetite: down from the waste they are centaurs, though women all above; but to the girdle do the gods inherit, beneath is all the fiends. There's hell, there's darkness, the sulphurous unfathom'd—fie! fie! pah!—an ounce of civet, good apothecary, to sweeten my imagination.—There's money for thee.

*Gloft.* Let me kiss that hand.

*Lear.* Let me wipe it first; it smells of mortality.

*Gloft.* Speak, Sir, do you know me?

*Lear.* I remember thy eyes well enough: nay, do thy worst, blind Cupid, I'll not love.—Read me this challenge; mark but the penning of it.

*Gloft.* Were all the letters suns, I could not see.

*Edg.* I would not take this from report. Wretched Cordelia!

What will thy virtue do, when thou shalt find This fresh affliction added to the tale Of thy unparallel'd griefs?

*Lear.* Read.

*Gloft.* What! with this case of eyes?

*Lear.* O ho! are you there with me? no eyes in your head, and no money in your purse? yet you see how this world goes.

*Gloft.* I see it feelingly.

*Lear.* What art mad? A man may see how this world goes with no eyes. Look with thy ears: see how yon justice rails on that simple thief; shake 'em together, and the first that drops, be it thief or justice, is a villain—Thou hast seen a farmer's dog bark at a beggar?

*Gloft.* Ay, Sir.

*Lear.* And the man run from the cur; there thou might'st behold the great image of authority? a dog's obey'd in office. Thou rascal, beadle, hold thy bloody hand; why dost thou lash that strumpet? Thou hotly lust'st to enjoy her in that kind for which thou whip'st her: do, do; the judge that sentenc'd her has been before-hand with thee.

*Gloft.* How stiff is my vile sense, that yields not yet?

*Lear.* I tell thee, the usurer hangs the coz'ner.—Through tatter'd cloaths small vices do appear; Robes and fur-gowns hide all. Plate sin with gold, And the strong lance of justice hurtleless breaks: Arm it in rags, a pigmy's straw doth pierce it. Why there'tis for thee, my friend make much of it; It has the power to seal the accuser's lips. Get thee glass eyes, and (like a scurvy politician) seem to see the things thou dost not. Pull, pull off my boots; hard, harder; so, so.

*Gloft.* O matter and impertinency mix'd, Reason in madness!

*Lear.* If thou wilt weep my fortunes, take my eyes. I know thee well enough, thy name is Gloster. Thou must be patient: we came crying hither; Thou know'st, the first time that we taste the air, We wail and cry.—I'll preach to thee, mark.

*Edg.* Break, lab'ring heart!

*Lear.* When we are born, we cry that we are come To this great stage of fools—

*Enter two or three Gentlemen.*

*Gent.* O! here he is; lay hand upon him. Sir, Your dearest daughter sends—

*Lear.* No rescue? What, a prisoner? I am even the natural fool of fortune. Use me well, you shall

have ransom.—Let me have surgeons. Oh! I am cut to th' brains.

*Gent.* You shall have any thing.

*Lear.* No seconds? All myself? I will die bravely, like a smug bridegroom; flush'd and pamper'd as a priest's whore. I am a king, my matters, know ye that?

*Gent.* You are a royal one, and we obey you.

*Lear.* It were an excellent stratagem to shoe a troop of horse with felt; I'll put 't in proof.—No noise, no noise.—Now will we steal upon these sons-in-law, and then—Kill, kill, kill, kill!

*[Exit, running.]*

*Edg.* A sight most moving in the meanest wretch, Past speaking in a king.

*Gloft.* Now, good, Sir, what are you? *[Strokes.]*

*Edg.* A most poor man, made tame to fortune's And prone to pity by experienc'd sorrows. Give me your hand.

*Gloft.* You ever gentle gods, take my breath And let not my ill genius tempt me more *[from me,]* To die before you please.

*Enter Goneril's Gentleman-Usher.*

*Gent.* A proclaim'd prize! O most happily met! That eyeless head of thine was first fram'd flesh To raise my fortunes. Thou old, unhappy traitor, The sword is out that must destroy thee.

*Gloft.* Now let thy friendly hand put strength enough to't.

*Gent.* Wherefore, bold peasant, Darest thou support a publish'd traitor? Hence, Lest I destroy thee too. Let go his arm.

*Edg.* Chill not let go, zir, without 'urther 'casion.

*Gent.* Let go, slave, or thou diest.

*Edg.* Good gentleman go your gate, and let poor folk pass; and chu'd ha' bin' zwagger'd out of my life, it would not have been so long as 'tis by a vort-night.—Nay, an' thou com'st near th' old man, I'll try whether your costard or my bal-low be th' harder.

*Gent.* Out, dunghill!

*Edg.* Chill pick your teeth, zir; come no matter your your foines. *[Edgar knocks him down.]*

*Gent.* Slave, thou hast slain me; oh! untimely death!

*Edg.* I know thee well, a serviceable villain; As hateful to the vices of thy mistress, As lust could wish.

*Gloft.* What! is he dead?

*Edg.* Sit you, Sir.

This is a letter carrier, and may have Some papers of intelligence, that may stand Our party in good stead to know.—What's here?

*[Takes a letter out of his pocket; opens, and reads.]*

"To Edmund Earl of Gloster.

"Let our mutual loves be remember'd: you have many opportunities to cut him off. If he return the conqueror, then I am still a prisoner, and his bed my gaol; from the loath'd warmth of which deliver me, and supply the place for your labour.

GONERIL."

A plot upon her husband's life, And the exchange my brother!—Here i'th sands I'll rake thee up, thou messenger of lust; Griev'd only that thou had'st no other death's-man. In time and place convenient I'll produce These letters to the sight of th' injur'd duke, As best shall serve our purpose. Come, your hand. Far off methinks I hear the beaten drum; Come, Sir, I will bestow you with a friend. *[Exit. A Chamber.]* Lear asleep on a couch; Cordelia and

*Attendants standing by him.*

*Cord.* His sleep is sound, and may have good effect

To cure his jarring senses, and repair  
This breach of nature.

*Physf.* We have employ'd the utmost pow'r of art,  
And this deep rest will perfect our design.

*Cord.* O Regan! Goneril! inhuman sisters!  
Had he not been your father, these white hairs  
Had challeng'd sure some pity! was this a face  
To be expos'd against the jarring winds?  
My enemy's dog, though he had bit me, shou'd  
Have stood that night against my fire.—He wakes;  
    speak to him.

*Physf.* Madam, do you; 'tis fittest. [majesty?]

*Cord.* How does my royal lord? how fares your

*Lear.* You do me wrong to take me out o'th'

Ha! is this too a world of cruelty? [grave.]

I know my privilege; think not that I will

Be us'd still like a wretched mortal: no,

No more of that.

*Cord.* Speak to me, Sir; who am I?

*Lear.* You are a soul in blifs; but I am bound  
Upon a wheel of fire, which my own tears  
Do scald like molten lead.

*Cord.* Sir, do you know me? [die?]

*Lear.* You are a spirit, I know; when did you

*Cord.* Still, still, far wide——

*Physf.* Madam, he's scarce awake; he'll soon  
grow more compos'd.

*Lear.* Where have I been? Where am I? Fair  
day-light?

I am mightily abus'd, I shou'd even die with pity  
To see another thus. I will not swear  
These are my hands.

*Cord.* O look upon me, Sir,

And hold your hand in blessing o'er me; nay,  
You must not keel.

*Lear.* Pray do not mock me;

I am a very foolish, fond, old man,  
Fourscore and upward; and, to deal plainly,  
I fear I am not in my perfect mind. [for me,

*Cord.* Nay, then farewell to patience: Witness  
Ye mighty pow'rs, I ne'er complain'd till now!

*Lear.* Methinks I shou'd know you, and know  
this man:

Yet I am doubtful; for I'm mainly ignorant  
What place this is; and all the skill I have,  
Remembers not these garments; nor do I know  
Where I did sleep last night.—Pray do not mock me,  
For, as I am a man, I think that lady  
To be my child Cordelia.

*Cord.* O my dear, dear father! [weep.]

*Lear.* Be your tears wet? yes faith! pray do not  
I know I have giv'n thee cause, and am so humbled  
With crosses since that I cou'd ask  
Forgiveness of thee, were it possible  
That thou cou'dst grant it; but I'm well assur'd  
Thou canst not; therefore I do stand thy justice:  
If thou hast poison for me I will drink it,  
Bless thee, and die.

*Cord.* O pity, Sir, a bleeding heart, and cease  
This killing language.

*Lear.* Tell me, friends, where am I?

*Physf.* In your own kingdom, Sir.

*Lear.* Do not abuse me.

*Physf.* Be comforted, good Madam, for the violence  
Of his distemper's past; we'll lead him in,  
Nor trouble him, till he is better settled.  
Will't please you, Sir, walk into freer air?

*Lear.* You must bear with me, I am old and  
foolish. [They lead him off.]

*Cord.* The gods restore you.—Hark, I hear afar  
The beaten drum. Old Kent's a man of's word.  
Oh! for an arm [sons]

Like the fierce thunderer's, when the earth-born  
Storm'd heav'n, to fight this injur'd father's battle!

That I cou'd shift my sex, and dye me deep  
In his opposer's blood! But, as I may,  
With women's weapons, piety and pray'rs,  
I'll aid his cause.—You never-erring gods,  
Fight on his side, and thunder on his foes  
Such tempests as his poor aged head sustain'd:  
Your image suffers when a monarch bleeds.  
'Tis your own cause; for that you succours bring;  
Revenge yourselves, and right an injur'd king.

## A C T V.

## SCENE, A Camp.

*Enter Goneril and Attendants.*

*Gon.* O UR sister's pow'rs already are arriv'd,  
And she herself has promis'd to prevent  
The night with her approach: have you provided  
The banquet I bespoke for her reception  
At my tent?

*Att.* So, please your grace, we have. [bow]

*Gon.* But thou, my poisoner, must prepare the  
That crowns this banquet; when our mirth is high,  
The trumpets sounding, and the flutes replying,  
Then is the time to give this fatal draught  
To this imperious sister; if then our arms succeed,  
Edmund, more dear than victory, is mine;  
But if defeat, or death itself attend me,  
'Twill charm my ghost to think I've left behind me  
No happy rival. Hark! she comes. [Trumpet. Ex.]

*Enter Bastard, in his Tent.*

*Bast.* To both these sisters have I sworn my love,  
Each jealous of the other, as the stung  
Are of the adder;—neither can be held,  
If both remain alive.—Where shall I fix?  
Cornwal is dead, and Regan's empty bed  
Seems cast by fortune for me—but already  
I have enjoy'd her, and bright Goneril  
With equal charms brings dear variety,  
And yet untasted beauty; I will use  
Her husband's count'nance for the battle, then  
Usurp at once his head and throne. [Enter officers.]  
My trusty scouts, you're well return'd; have ye  
The strength and posture of the enemy? [descry'd]  
*Off.* We have, and were surpris'd to find  
The banish'd Kent return'd, and at their head;  
Your brother Edgar on the rear; old Gloster  
(A moving spectacle) led through the ranks,  
Whose pow'rful tongue, and more prevailing wrongs,  
Have so enrag'd their rustic spirit, that with  
Th' approaching dawn we must expect a battle.

*Bast.* You bring a welcome hearing; each to his  
charge;

Line well your ranks, and stand on your award.  
To night repose you; and i'th' morn we'll give  
The sun a fight that shall be worth his rising. [Ex.]

## SCENE, a Valley near the Camp.

*Enter Edgar and Gloster.*

*Edg.* Here, Sir, take you the shadow of this tree  
For your good host; pray that the right may thrive:  
If ever I return to you again,  
I'll bring you comfort. [Exit.]

*Gloster.* Thanks, friendly Sir;

The fortune your good cause deserves betide you.

[An alarm; after which Gloster speaks.]

The fight grows hot; the whole war's now at work,  
And the goar'd battle bleeds in ev'ry vein, [roar.]  
Whilst drums and trumpets drown loud slaughter's  
Where's Gloster now, that us'd to head the fray,  
And scour the ranks where deadliest danger lay?  
Here, like a shepherd, in a lonely shade,  
Idle, unarm'd, and list'ning to the fight.  
Yet the disabled courser, maim'd and blind,  
When in his stall he hears the rattling war,

Foaming with rage, tears up the batter'd ground,  
And tugs for liberty.

No more of shelter, thou blind worm, but forth  
To th' open field; the war may come this way,  
And crush thee into rest.—Here lay thee down,  
And tear the earth; that work befits a mole.  
O dark despair! When, Edgar, wilt thou come  
To pardon, and dismiss me to the grave?—

[*A retreat sounded.*]

Hark! a retreat; the king, I fear, has lost.

*Re-enter* Edg., *bloody.*

*Edg.* Away, old man; give me your hand, away!  
King Lear has lost; he and his daughter ta'en:  
And this, ye gods, is all that I can save.

Of this most precious wreck, Give me your hand.

*Glo.* No farther, Sir: a man may rot, even here.

*Edg.* What! in ill thoughts again? Men must  
endure

Their going hence, ev'n as their coming hither.

*Glo.* And that's true too. [*Exeunt.*]

*Flourish.* Enter in conquest, Albany, Goneril, Regan,  
Bastard.—Lear, Kent, Cordelia, prisoners.

*Alb.* It is enough to have conquer'd; cruelty  
Shou'd ne'er survive the fight. Captain o' th' guards,  
Treat well your royal prisoners, till you have  
Our farther orders, as you hold our pleasure.

*Gon.* Hark, Sir; not as you hold our husband's  
pleasure, [*To the captain aside.*]

But as you hold your life, dispatch your prisoners.  
Our empire can have no sure settlement  
But in their death; the earth that covers them  
Binds fast our throne. Let me hear they are dead.

*Capt.* I shall obey your orders.

*Bast.* Sir, I approve it safest to pronounce  
Sentence of death upon this wretched king,  
Whose age has charms in it, his title more,  
To draw the commons once more to his side;  
'Twere best prevent——

*Alb.* Sir, by your favour,  
I hold you but a subject of this war,  
Not as a brother.

*Reg.* That's as we list to grace him.  
Have you forgot that he did lead our powers?  
Boie the communion of our place and person?  
And that authority may well stand up,  
And call itself your brother.

*Gon.* Not so hot;  
In his own merits he exalts himself  
More than in your addition.

*Enter* Edgar, *disguised.*

*Alb.* What art thou?

*Edg.* Pardon me, Sir, that I presume to stop  
A prince and conqueror; yet, ere you triumph,  
Give ear to what a stranger can deliver  
Of what concerns you more than triumph can.  
I do impeach your general thereof: treason,  
Lord Edmund, that usurps the name of Gloucester,  
Of foulest practice 'gainst your life and honour:  
This charge is true; and wretched though I seem,  
I can produce a champion that will prove  
In single combat what I do avouch,  
If Edmund dares but trust his cause and sword.

*Bast.* What will not Edmund dare? My lord,  
The favour that you'd instantly appoint [*I beg*  
The place where I may meet this challenger,  
Whom I will sacrifice to my wrong'd fame:  
Remember, Sir, that injur'd honour's nice,  
And cannot brook delay.

*Alb.* Anon, before our tent, i' th' army's view,  
There let the herald cry.

*Edg.* I thank your highness in my champion's  
He'll wait your trumpet's call. [*name:*]

*Alb.* Lead. [*Exeunt*]

*Manent* Lear, Kent, Cordelia, *guarded.*

*Lear.* O Kent! Cordelia!

You are the only pair that I e'er wrong'd,  
And the just gods have made you witnesses  
Of my disgrace; the very shame of fortune,  
To see me chain'd and shackled at these years!  
Yet were you but spectators of my woes,  
Not fellow-sufferers, all were well. [*fiction.*]

*Cord.* This language, Sir, adds yet to our af-

*Lear.* Thou, Kent, didst head the troops that fought  
Expos'd thy life and fortune for a master, [my battle,  
That had (as I remember) banish'd thee.

*Kent.* Pardon me, Sir, that once I broke your  
Banish'd by you, I kept me here disguis'd [orders:  
To watch your fortunes, and protect your person:  
You know you entertain'd a rough, blunt fellow,  
One Caius, and you thought he did you service.

*Lear.* My trusty Caius, I have lost him too!  
'Twas a rough honesty. [*Weeps.*]

*Kent.* I was that Caius,  
Disguis'd in that coarse dress to follow you. [*Caius?*]

*Lear.* My Caius too! Wer't thou my trusty  
Enough, enough——

*Cord.* Ah me, he faints! his blood forsakes his  
Help, Kent.—— [*check.*]

*Lear.* No, no, they shall not see us weep,  
We'll see them rot first.—Guards, lead away to  
Come, Kent; Cordelia, come; [*prison.*]

We two will sit alone, like birds i' th' cage:  
When thou dost ask me blessing, I'll kneel down  
And ask of thee forgiveness; thus we'll live,  
And pray, and sing, and tell old tales, and laugh  
At gilded butterflies; hear sycophants  
Talk of court news, and we'll talk with them too,  
Who loses and who wins; who's in, who's out:  
And take on us the mystery of things,  
As if we were heav'n's spies.

*Cord.* Upon such sacrifices  
The gods themselves throw incense.

*Lear.* Have I caught ye?  
He that parts us, must bring a brand from heav'n:  
Together we'll out-till the spite of hell,  
And die the wonders of the world! Away. [*Ex.*]

*Flourish.* Enter before the Tent, Albany, Goneril,  
Regan, Guards, and Attendants; Goneril speak-  
ing apart to the Captain of the Guards entering.

*Gon.* Here's gold for thee, thou know'st our late  
command

Upon your prisoners lives; about it straight, and at  
Our evening banquet let it raise our mirth,  
I'o hear that they are dead.

*Capt.* I shall not fail your orders. [*Exit.*]

Albany, Goneril, Regan, take their Seats.

*Alb.* Now, Gloucester, trait to thy single virtue;  
for thy soldiers,

All levied in my name, have in my name  
Took their discharge: now let our trumpets speak,  
And herald read out this.

*Herald reads.* "If any man of quality within  
the lists of the army will maintain upon Edmund,  
suppos'd Earl of Gloucester, that he is a manifest trait-  
tor, let him appear by the third sound of the trum-  
pet; he is bold in his defence——Again, again.

[*Trumpet answers from within.*]

*Enter* Edgar, *arm'd.*

*Alb.* Lord Edgar!

*Bast.* Ha! my brother!  
This is the only combatant that I cou'd fear,  
For in my breast guilt duels on his side:  
But, conscience, what have I to do with thee?  
Awe thou dull legitimate slaves: but I  
Was born a libertine, and so I keep me.

*Edg.* My noble prince, a word;—ere we engage—

Into your highness' hands I give this paper;  
It will the truth of my impeachment prove,  
Whatever be my fortune in the fight.

*Alb.* We shall peruse it.

*Edg.* Now, Edmund, draw thy sword,  
That if my speech has wrong'd a noble heart,  
Thy arm may do thee justice; here i'th' presence  
Of this high prince, these queens, and this crown'd list  
I brand thee with the spotted name of traitor;  
False to thy gods, thy father, and thy brother,  
And, what is more, thy friend; false to this prince:  
If then thou shar'st a spark of Gloster's virtue,  
Acquit thyself; or if thou shar'st his courage,  
Meet this defiance bravely.

*Bast.* And dares Edgar,  
The beaten, routed Edgar, brave his conqueror?  
From all thy troops and thee I forc'd the field:  
Thou hast lost the gen'ral stake, and art thou now  
Come with thy petty single stock to play  
This after-game?

*Edg.* Half-blooded man,  
Thy father's sin first, then his punishment;  
The dark and vicious place where he begot thee  
Cost him his eyes; from thy licentious mother  
Thou draw'st thy villainy; but for thy part  
Of Gloster's blood, I hold thee worth my sword.

*Bast.* Thou bear'st thee on thy mother's piety,  
Which I despise; thy mother being chaste,  
Thou art assur'd thou art but Gloster's son:  
But mine, disdaining constancy, leaves me  
To hope that I am sprung from nobler blood,  
And possibly a king might be my fire:  
But be my birth's uncertain chance as 'twill,  
Who 'twas that had the hit to father me  
I know not: 'tis enough that I am I:  
Of this one thing I'm certain—that I have  
A daring soul, and so have at thy heart.  
Sound trumpet.

[*Figbt. Bastard falls.*]

*Gen. and Reg.* Save him! save him!

*Gen.* This was practice, Gloster;  
Thou won't the field, and wast not bound to fight  
A vanquish'd enemy. Thou art not conquer'd,  
But cozen'd and betray'd.

*Alb.* Shut your mouth, lady,  
Or with this paper I shall stop it.—Hold, Madam!  
Thou worse than any name, read thy own evil—  
No tearing, lady; I perceive you know it.

*Gen.* Say, if I do, who shall arraign me for't?  
The laws are mine, not thine.

*Alb.* Most monstrous! Ha! Thou know'st it too!

*Bast.* Ask me not what I know,  
I have not breath to answer idle questions.

*Alb.* I have resolv'd.—Your right, brave Sir,  
has conquer'd.

[*To Edgar.*]

Along with me: I must consult your father.

[*Exeunt Albany and Edgar.*]

*Reg.* Help every hand to save a noble life;  
My half o'th' kingdom for a man of skill  
To stop this precious stream.

*Bast.* Away, ye empiricks,  
Torment me not with your vain offices;  
The sword has pierc'd too far; legitimacy  
At last has conquer'd.

*Reg.* The price of nature dies.

*Gen.* Away, the minutes are too precious;  
Disturb us not with thy impertinent sorrow.

*Reg.* Art thou my rival then profess?

*Gen.* Why, was our love a secret? Cou'd there be  
Beauty like mine, and gallantry like his,  
And not a mutual love? Just nature then  
Had err'd. Behold that copy of perfection,  
That youth, whose story will have no foul page,  
But where it says he stoop'd to Regan's arms:

Which yet was but compliance, not affection;  
A charity to begging, ruin'd beauty!

*Reg.* Who begg'd when Goneril writ that? Ex-  
pose it, [*Throws her a letter.*]

And let it be your army's mirth, as 'twas  
This charming youth's and mine, when in the bow'r  
He breath'd the warmest extasies of love;  
Then panting on my breast, cry'd, Matchless Regan!  
That Goneril and thou shou'd e'er be kin!

*Gen.* Die, Circe, for thy charms are at an end;  
Expire before my face, and let me see  
How well that boasted beauty will become  
Congealing blood, and death's convulsive pangs:  
Die, and be hush'd; for at my tent last night  
Thou drank'st thy bane, amidst the rev'ling bowl:  
Ha! Dost thou smile? Is then thy death thy sport?  
Or has the trusty potion made thee mad?

*Reg.* Thou com'st as short of me in thy revenge,  
As in my Gloster's love; my jealousy  
Inspir'd me to prevent thy feeble malice,  
And poison thee at thy own banquet.

*Gen.* Ha! [*Strife;*]

*Bast.* No more, my queens, of this untimely  
You both deserv'd my love, and both possess it.  
Come, soldiers, bear me in; and let  
Your royal presence grace my last minutes.  
Now, Edgar, thy proud conquest I forgive:  
Who would not chuse, like me, to yield his breath,  
T' have rival queens contend for him in death?

SCENE, A Prison.

*Lear asleep, with his Head on Cordelia's Lap.*

*Cord.* What toils, thou wretched king, hast thou  
endur'd,

To make thee draw, in chains, a sleep so sound?  
Thy better angel charm thy ravish'd mind  
With fancy'd freedom! Peace is us'd to lodge  
On cottage straw. Thou hast the beggar's bed,  
Therefore shou'd'st have the beggar's careless  
thought.

And now, my Edgar, I remember thee:  
What fate has seiz'd thee in this general wreck  
I know not, but I know thou must be wretched,  
Because Cordelia holds thee dear. [image  
O gods! a sudden gloom o'erwhelms me, and the  
Of death o'erspreads the place.—Ha! who are these?

*Enter Captain and Officers with Cords.*

*Capt.* Now, Sirs, dispatch; already you are paid  
In part, the best of your reward's to come.

*Lear.* Charge, charge upon their flank; their  
left wing halts.

Push, push the battle, and the day's our own.  
Their ranks are broken; down, down with Albany.  
Who holds my hands?—O thou deceiving sleep,  
I was this very minute on the chace,  
And now a pris'n'r here!—What mean the slaves?  
You will not murder me?

*Cord.* Help, earth and heaven!

For your souls sake, dear Sirs, and for the gods.

*Offs.* No tears, good lady; no pleading against  
gold and preferment.

Come, Sirs, make ready your cords.

*Cord.* You, Sir, I'll seize,  
You have a human form; and if no prayers  
Can touch your soul to spare a poor king's life,  
If there be any thing that you hold dear,  
By that I beg you to dispatch me first.

*Capt.* Comply with her request; dispatch her first.

*Lear.* Off, hell-hounds! by the gods I charge  
you spare her!

'Tis my Cordelia, my true pious daughter.  
No pity?—Nay, then take an old man's vengeance.  
*Snatches a partisan, and strikes down two of them;  
the rest quit Cordelia, and turn upon him.*

*Enter Edgar and Albany.*

*Edg.* Death! Hell! ye vultures, hold your impious hands,

Or take a speedier death than you wou'd give.

*Capt.* By whose command?

*Edg.* Behold the duke, your lord.

*Alb.* Guards, seize those instruments of cruelty.

*Cord.* Oh, my Edgar!

*Edg.* My dear Cordelia! Lucky was the minute Of our approach; the gods have weigh'd our sufferings;

W' have pass'd the fire, and now must shine to ages.

*Gent.* Look here, my lord; see where the general Has slain two of 'em. [rous king

*Lear.* Did I not, fellow?

I've seen the day, with my good biting Faulchion I cou'd have made 'em skip: I am old now, And these vile crosses spoil me! Out of breath, Fie, oh! quite out of breath, and spent. [hither

*Alb.* Bring in old Kent; and, Edgar, guide you Your father, whom you said was near; [*Edg.* He may be an ear-witness, at the least, Of our proceedings. [Kent brought in here.

*Lear.* Who are you?

My eyes are none o'th' best, I'll tell you straight:

Oh, Albany! Well, Sir, we are your captives,

And you are come to see death pass upon us.

Why this delay?—Or is't your highness' pleasure To give us first the torture? Say ye so?

Why here's old Kent, and I, as tough a pair As e'er bore tyrant's stroke.—But my Cordelia, My poor Cordelia here, O pity— [jeffy,

*Alb.* Take off their chains.—Thou injur'd man— The wheel of fortune now has made her circle, And blessings yet stand 'twixt thy grave and thee.

*Lear.* Com'st thou, inhuman lord, to soothe us To a fool's paradise of hope, to make [back Our doom more wretched? Go to, we are too well Acquainted with misfortune to be gull'd With lying hope; no, we will hope no more.

*Alb.* I have a tale unfold, so full of wonder, As cannot meet an easy faith; But by that royal injur'd head 'tis true.

*Kent.* What wou'd your highness;

*Alb.* Know, the noble Edgar

Impeach'd Lord Edmund, since the fight, of treason, And dar'd him for the proof of single combat, In which the gods confirm'd his charge by conquest; I left e'en now the traitor wounded mortally.

*Lear.* And whither tends this story?

*Alb.* Ere they fought, Lord Edgar gave into my hands this paper; A blacker scroll of treason and of lust Than can be found in the records of hell: There, sacred Sir, behold the character Of Goneril, the worst of daughters, but More vicious wife.

*Cord.* Cou'd there be yet addition to their guilt? What will not they that wrong a father do!

*Alb.* Since then my injuries, Lear, fall in with I have resolv'd the same redress for both. [thine,

*Kent.* What says my Lord?

*Cord.* Speak, for methought I heard The charming voice of a descending god. [banded,

*Alb.* The troops, by Edmund rais'd, I have dismissed: Those that remain are under my command.

What comfort may be brought to cheer your age, And heal your savage wrongs, shall be apply'd; For to your majesty we do resign

Your kingdom, save what part yourself conferr'd

On us in marriage.

*Kent.* Hear you that, my liege?

*Cord.* Then there are gods, and virtue is their [care.

*Lear.* Is't possible?

Let the spheres stop their course, the sun make halt, The winds be hush'd, the seas and fountains rest; All nature pause, and listen to the change.

Where is my Kent, my Caius?

*Kent.* Here, my liege.

*Lear.* Why I have news that will recal thy youth. Ha! didst thou hear't, or did th' inspiring gods Whisper to me alone? old Lear shall be A king again. [said it.

*Kent.* The prince, that like a god has pow'r, has

*Lear.* Cordelia then shall be a queen, mark that: Cordelia shall be queen; winds catch the sound, And bear it on your rosy wings to heav'n— Cordelia is a queen.

*Re-enter Edgar with Gloster.*

*Alb.* Look, Sir, where pious Edgar comes, Leading his eyeless father. O my liege! His wond'rous story well deserves your leisure; What he has done and suffer'd for your sake, What for the fair Cordelia's! [knees, to hail

*Glof.* Where's my liege? conduct me to his His second birth of empire: my dear Edgar Has with himself reveal'd the king's blest restora-

*Lear.* My poor dark Gloster! [tion.

*Glof.* O let me kiss that once more scepter'd hand!

*Lear.* Hold, thou mistak'st the majesty: kneel Cordelia has our pow'r, Cordelia's queen. [here; Speak, is not that the noble, suffering Edgar?

*Glof.* My pious son, more dear than my lost eyes.

*Lear.* I wrong'd him too, but here's the fair amends.

*Edg.* Your leave, my liege, for an unwelcome Edmund (but that's a trifle) is expir'd. [message. What more will touch you, your imperious daughters, Goneril and haughty Regan, both are dead, Each by the other poison'd at a banquet: This, dying, they confess'd.

*Cord.* O fatal period of ill-govern'd life!

*Lear.* Ingrateful as they were, my heart feels yet A pang of nature for their wretched fall.— But, Edgar, I defer thy joys too long:

Thou serv'dst distress'd Cordelia; take her crown'd, Th' imperial grace fresh blooming on her brow.

Nay, Gloster, thou hast here a father's right,

Thy helping hand 't'heap blessings on their heads.

*Kent.* Old Kent throws in his hearty wishes too.

*Edg.* The gods and you too largely recompence What I have done; the gift strikes merit dumb.

*Cord.* Nor do I blush to own myself o'erpaid For all my sufferings past. [charge.

*Glof.* Now, gentle gods, give Gloster his dis-

*Lear.* No, Gloster, thou hast business yet for life; Thou, Kent, and I, retir'd to some close cell,

Will gently pass our short reserves of time

In calm reflections on our fortunes past,

Chear'd with relation of the prosperous reign

Of this celestial pair; thus our remains

Shall in an even course of thoughts be past,

Enjoy the present hour, nor fear the last.

*Edg.* Our drooping country now erects her head,

Peace spreads her balmy wings, and plenty blooms.

Divine Cordelia, all the gods can witness

How much thy love to empire I prefer!

Thy bright example shall convince the world

(Whatever storms of fortune are decreed)

That truth and virtue shall at last succeed.



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